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With the kind regards of

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LETTERS ON EARLY RISING.

Page 6

LETTERS
ON THE
IMPORTANCE, DUTY, AND ADVANTAGES
OF
EARLY RISING.

ADDRESSED TO
HEADS OF FAMILIES, THE MAN OF BUSINESS, THE LOVER
OF NATURE, THE STUDENT, AND THE CHRISTIAN.

And is there aught in sleep can charm the wise?
To lie in dead oblivion, losing half
The fleeting moments of too short a life?
Total extinction of the enlightened soul!

Thomson's Seasons—Summer.

We are not of the night, nor of darkness: therefore let us
not sleep as do others. 1 Thess. v. 5, 6.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON.

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1820.

TO

MRS. HANNAH MORE.

MADAM,

I AM aware that it is frequently the custom of those who are placed in similar situations to myself, to profess their hatred of flattery, and their determination to prove it by their conduct, and yet falsify their own professions, by conveying their adulation in the very language which is employed to reprehend it. But it is enough for me, to recollect that I am dedicating this series of letters to one, whose life is influenced by the principles, and whose opinions are formed upon the truths of the Bible, to check the feeling, however strong it may be, that would lead me to *say* what I may

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still conscientiously *think*. If praise could have produced in your mind those bad effects which too frequently attend it, you would long ago have been the victim of its fascination; and I should be much too *late*, as well as too *inconsiderable*, to add to its evil consequences.

With regard to the subject of the succeeding Letters, I can only say, Madam, that it is connected in some measure with the leading principles which have been enforced by your writings. It is an important branch of "christian morals," and forms a distinguishing feature in "practical piety:" it is of great importance to the young, whose interests have always been so near your heart, and its adoption would be of essential benefit in that large and elevated class of society, whose "manners" have received a new impression from your delineation of them: whilst

the motives from which it ought to proceed, are such as are inculcated in the writings of the great apostle of the Gentiles, and are presented in the pages of the whole of the sacred volume.

That you, Madam, the morning of whose life has been so beneficially, and consequently, so happily employed, may enjoy a calmness of mind, and a “peace which passeth all understanding,” proportionably increasing as the shades of evening advance around you, is the sincere wish, and shall form the earnest prayer of,

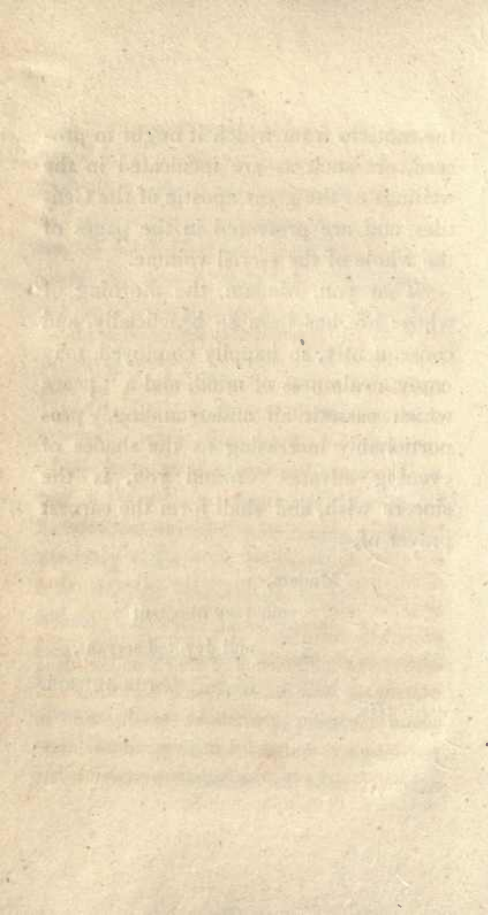
Madam,

your very obedient

and devoted servant,

THE AUTHOR.

August, 1818.



PREFACE.

IT is to be lamented that the world has been deprived of a considerable portion of useful knowledge and valuable instruction, by men of eminent talents declining to employ them upon homely and practical subjects.

There are but few, comparatively speaking, who possess sufficient information, and are at the same time addicted to that habit of attention and application which is necessary to compose a treatise upon any subject. And of those few, some are prevented by the importunate avocations of business, others are deterred by a diffidence of their own abilities ; while those who can command both time and confidence, generally follow the direction in which their taste has led their genius, or draw from those stores which their profession has compelled them to accumulate.

Thus, while the superiority of some minds almost disdains such topics as afford but little room for the display of their learning or their wit, the particular bias of others entirely overlooks them. The benevolence of Addison, however, happily overcame this literary pride; and to him, together with his coadjutors and his imitators, we are in no small degree indebted for that refinement of manners, and correctness of morals, which distinguish our own country. But notwithstanding our British Essayists have so admirably and so successfully exposed the follies, and censured the vices of their respective cotemporaries, an observer of no extraordinary penetration may still discover in every department of society much to ridicule, and more to reprehend. There being no prying *Spectator* in the present day to mark the delinquencies of private life, no busy *Tatler* to report them to the world, and no friendly *Guardian* to caution the rising generation against their commission; fearing that talents might never stoop to the consideration of so simple a subject as that which occupies the following pages; but at

the same time being convinced of its importance, and concerned to find it so generally neglected, the Author has been induced to submit this little work to the public.

It not unfrequently happens that the popularity of a name procures that success for a publication which its intrinsic merits do not deserve; and the peculiar excellence of a production sometimes confers that distinction upon a name which the writer does not anticipate. But the Author being aware that his name is not of sufficient importance to give celebrity to his work, and conscious that his work will ever be too obscure to reflect lustre upon his name, feels a greater satisfaction in knowing he shall enjoy the privilege of concealment, than in wishing to obtain the honour of publicity. He congratulates himself upon thus escaping those anxieties which so often agitate the candidates for literary fame, being equally free from the apprehension of tarnishing laurels already won, and the desire of acquiring new ones,—from the dread of censure and the hope of praise. He will also escape the suspicion of having been influenced, in

his humble attempt to destroy the palace of Somnus, by the same motive which induced Erostratus to burn the temple of Diana.

The Author is sensible that he has a powerful antagonist to contend with. Should the weapons he has selected be found improper for the combat, or his own strength unequal to his foe; should he fail in every instance completely to defeat his enemy, perhaps he may so far weaken him, as to render him an easier conquest to one who is furnished with more suitable arms, and is able to wield them better. If he be altogether unsuccessful in the engagement, he hopes, at least, to stimulate some generous mind to accomplish what he has attempted.

The following observations on the advantages of early rising, and the evils of the contrary practice, are offered in the form of Letters, the epistolary style appearing to be best adapted to the homeliness of the subject. Otherwise, either the fastidious ear of the refined reader would have been offended by the frequent repetition of common-place expressions, or the good sense of the more judicious

would have been disgusted with the affected periphrases which must have been resorted to in order to avoid them. These Letters are addressed to persons whose ages and pursuits are different, with the view of rendering the remarks which they contain more immediately applicable to the circumstances of the reader, and therefore more likely to enforce conviction upon the mind, and to induce a reformation in the habits.

Should the Author, when mingling hereafter in society, ever have the happiness to hear one *parent* say, in allusion to these pages, ‘ By them I was first led to improve those hours which were formerly consumed in sleep, and thus I have not only been able to perform with ease the duties which before were often neglected, but I have also experienced the satisfaction of having set a good example to my children :’—Should he ever hear one *lover of nature* observe,—‘ To them I am indebted for the contemplation of scenes more lovely than I had ever beheld, and the pictures which creation now unfolds to my sight, are more beautiful than those which poetic imagery once

presented to my fancy : ’—Should he ever hear one *student* remark, ‘ There was a time when my health was impaired in the same proportion as my knowledge increased, but they taught to me promote at once the vigour of my body, and the improvement of my mind : ’ but especially, should he ever hear one *christian* declare, ‘ my devotions have never been so ardent, and my faith has never been so strong, as in those seasons which they persuaded me to snatch from oblivion,’ he will not consider his time mis-spent, or his labour ill-bestowed.

LETTERS
ON
THE IMPORTANCE, DUTY, AND ADVANTAGES
OF
EARLY RISING.

LETTER I.

To Mr. G——.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HARDLY think it necessary to begin this letter in the manner in which many are commenced,—I mean, with an apology. Had our friendship been less sincere, or had our acquaintance with each other been of a shorter duration, I might have troubled you with a long list of successive engagements, and important avocations, which have prevented my earlier acknowledgment of the kindness which I so lately experienced whilst residing under

your roof. The pleasures of that intimacy which we formed when at school, have been agreeably renewed; and the various scenes which we have since witnessed, and the different spheres of action in which we have moved, have failed to obliterate that early enthusiasm which so often animates the mind of the *boy*, but ceases to exert its dominion over the reason of the *man*. The professions which are made of future faithfulness, as they arise from the contracted views of present interest, are generally forgotten with the particular circumstances from which they spring: and I cannot help looking upon those occasional instances which are to be met with, of the early attachment of youth surmounting the obstacles which are opposed to them, with sentiments of peculiar satisfaction. And I am sure you will believe me when I tell you, that whilst my late visit to your hospitable mansion at Fairleigh received an addition to its enjoyments by recollections of the past, its agreeable engagements will afford me a subject for remembrance in future.

Attached as I am to those pleasures which society affords, and having so little of the recluse in my disposition, or of the anchorite in my habits, nothing is so calculated to suit my taste, as the participation in the little incidents of a domestic circle. And if any thing were wanting to complete the gratification which I derived from your individual society, and from the beautiful scenery of nature with which I was surrounded, it was amply supplied in the company of the amiable members of your family. When I want a living representation of unaffected manners and cordial hospitality, connected with that softening sweetness which maternal tenderness throws over the character, I shall immediately revert to Mrs. G.: and though I am not prone to any thing like extravagance in expression, yet I do not remember in any instance to have found a young female in whom I was more interested than in Charlotte, or a young man to whom I felt more attached than to Charles; whilst the junior branches of the family served to call into exercise

those feelings of tenderness which are so benignant in their nature, and so beneficial in their operation. Much of the comfort of every family depends upon its internal regulation and correct government; and the enjoyment of an occasional visitor is materially increased or diminished, in proportion as these are observed or neglected.

But do not think, my dear William, that I am forgetting my own principles, and endeavouring to make up for any neglect of an earlier acknowledgment of your kindness, by paying in flattery what I owe in gratitude. The expression of friendship that falls from the lips, is only valuable as it proceeds from the heart; and the professions of regard which so readily flow from the pen, are only to be considered sincere, in proportion as they evidence themselves by the conduct of the life. Of all the detestable instances of treachery, none was so base as that which betrayed with a kiss; and if my own feelings and inclination did not prompt me to the sincerity which I am about to manifest, your repeated request

that I would faithfully point out to you any deficiencies which I could perceive in your family arrangements, or any errors that I had detected in your individual conduct, would at once preclude that *faithless* shame, which so frequently disguises its odious qualities, by assuming the specious appellation of a *proper delicacy*.

Under any other feelings than those by which I have professed myself to be actuated, I should have been led to adopt a very different line of conduct from that which I now intend to pursue. What the world calls politeness might have whispered in my ear, that finding fault was a rude return for a favour bestowed, and that it was a very questionable mode of expressing a sense of obligation, by interfering with the arrangements, and censuring the domestic economy of the family in which that obligation had been conferred. But sincerity, and (the only source from whence a genuine sincerity can flow,) that sense of duty which the doctrines of the christian religion produce, will teach a very different lesson; and

the recollection of the universal injunction of "doing unto others as we would be done unto," serves at once to remove every scruple from my mind, and to add greater zeal to my conscientious resolution.

Do not be alarmed, my dear friend, when I begin by telling you, that I not only perceived with equal surprise and regret what appeared to me a very considerable deficiency in your family arrangements, but that the error to which I allude, was connected with the commencement of every returning day; that it was not an occasional, but an habitually repeated, delinquency; and that I very much fear, it is likely that it will not only affix a stigma to the little social community of which you are the head, but that its evil effects will be extended down to the succeeding generation, on which you so often look with so paternal and anxious an interest. You will guess that I refer to the many, many hours *consumed in bed*, instead of being devoted to the numberless beneficial employments in which they might have been spent. And I

really cannot help thinking, that, as your example is of so much importance to those who look up to you for a pattern, if I can convince you of the folly—the worse than folly—the guilt of this prejudicial habit, you will be not only neglecting your duty to yourself, but also to those in whose welfare you are so greatly concerned, if you do not endeavour at once to conquer it, and to be as instrumental in leading others to effect a similar victory, as you have been unintentionally the means of confirming them in their error.

It is not at all unlikely that ere this you may have smiled at the importance which I appear to have attached to what has seldom occupied your thoughts; and been even pleased to think, that the formidable charge which you had anticipated, has ended in an arraignment to which, though you cannot plead “not guilty,” you suppose that you have much to urge in mitigation of punishment. But, my dear friend, now that I have assumed the gravity and arrayed myself in the imposing dignity of the judge, I

am determined to prosecute you with the utmost severity of the law; and though I shall listen with patience to all that you can urge in your defence, yet I am resolved that the emotions of friendly attachment shall not interfere with the sterner justice of my judicial character.

It is a very possible case that you may be led to suspect that I shall not be sufficiently disinterested; that I am attached to the peculiar habits of my own life, and therefore censure those of others which do not agree with them. But, whilst I am very willing to acknowledge that a long continued course in any particular line of conduct serves to excite our prejudices in its favour, yet I would also at the same time remind you, that if that course was originally adopted upon the convictions of judgment and the dictates of conscience, a perseverance in it ought only to increase its importance, and to render the testimony of such a man of superior value and greater weight. And when in addition to this it is found, that this course resulted from a tho-

rough persuasion of the error of that which had been abandoned, and was continued on a contrast of the advantages of the one with the evils of the other, it surely will be no objection that the party who recommends, possesses all the knowledge which experience affords; whilst the party who opposes, labours under all the disadvantages which the want of it occasions.

But I really feel, my dear William, that I am now doing you an injustice, in believing for one moment that you can seriously defend the indolent and pernicious habit to which I have alluded. An excuse is surely all you will attempt to urge; and even this I would not admit, if you should venture it. I must in your case pronounce it *inexcusable*: and whilst as a friend I so very deeply regret that you should be daily committing what appears to me a very culpable sin, I am also anxious that you should partake of the pleasures, and share with myself the advantages, which the *practice of early rising* affords. But if you should be inclined to adduce any extenuat-

ing circumstances, I feel so confident of the high ground on which I stand, that I shall not only be happy in meeting them, but must anticipate your complete surrender to my opinions. And should that surrender of the judgment lead to a corresponding change in the conduct, I shall rejoice; and I am sure you will not regret that I ever alluded to the subject.

But though I did not begin with an apology, I will end with one. I am intruding upon your valuable time: to the writer it is not of so much importance, as he has most likely *lived*, and *thought*, and *moved*, and *acted*, two or three hours more to day than you have; but to the reader who has lost those precious hours, the engagements of the day are more than sufficient for the extent of its duration.

Adieu.

LETTER II.

To the same.

MY VERY DEAR SIR,

YOUR reply to my letter was just such an one as I had reason to expect from the knowledge which I possess of your character, and the proofs which I have seen of the ingenuousness of your disposition. You are quite right in supposing that I shall consider it no labour to resume the subject to which I before alluded, and to afford you such further inducements to overcome a most disgraceful and destructive habit as my own experience may suggest. You are not the only one who regrets having neglected to form the habit of early rising when young; and I will not pretend to conceal, what your better judgment must convince you of, that it will be a much less easy task *now*, than it would have been thirty years ago. But if

there are greater difficulties in the way, yet there are some inducements calculated to operate upon you *now*, of a more powerful nature than there would have been *then*. In youth the question is merely personal : if the self-indulgence which the practice of lying in bed longer than the requirements of nature demand be criminal, its bad effects are confined to the individual ; but when placed at the head of a family, there is the double responsibility which is attached to particular and relative guilt. The influence which ought to be exerted over others to induce them to follow what is right, becomes a talent abused, when this use is neglected to be made of it ; and really I am most inclined to be earnest whilst dwelling upon this my confessedly darling theme, when I recollect that in the observance or neglect of it, so much of the comfort or uneasiness of every member of a family is involved.

But it is far from being too late to correct your error. I am very well aware of the power of habit ; that by repetition,

those acts, which at first were difficult to be performed, are done quite mechanically ; and that those manual operations, which at first required the closest attention of the mental faculties, are afterwards effected without any perceptible intellectual exertion. But the great difficulty in overcoming any particular habit consists in this : by repetition it appears to be almost natural ; a part as it were of our physical constitution, and connected with the very first principles of our bodily conformation ; and thus, the reason, no longer directed to the consideration of how far it is right or wrong, deserts its proper office, and takes its station very frequently on the side which it ought to oppose. But where the voice of conscience and the dictates of duty are resorted to, where the judgment is suffered to exert itself unbiassed by prejudice and partiality, there we have only to arouse the conscience and convince the judgment, in order to lead to the exercise of those powers which shall at once break off the fetters of habit and chains of custom.

Where, notwithstanding such a conviction is produced, habit is still suffered to prevail over conscience, we have a lamentable instance of human frailty, and a melancholy proof of the debasement which sin has produced. Whilst the slave of his passions may adopt the sentiment,

"Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor,"

I hope my friend will nearer resemble the character which our immortal Milton has sketched, and which forms so perfect a contrast to the idea of the heathen poet :

————— "I

Approve the good, and follow what I approve."

Amidst all the inventions which have been introduced within these few years, I do not remember to have seen a single instance of any letters patent having been granted, "for a new and effectual method of making time!" And yet I cannot but think this would be a much more valuable discovery than the philosopher's stone itself; inasmuch as the one would put into

our possession what the easily-created gold of the other could never have purchased. Now, though I do not intend to obtain any exclusive privilege either of using or of communicating to others this discovery, yet I certainly do think that the adoption of the daily habit of early rising, would most completely effect all that could be desired from such an invention. Only suppose, for one moment, a man engaged in some important undertaking, one which required the exertion of all his powers; to which he must bring all the stores of his memory, and the fruits of past diligence, and on which he must exercise every faculty that he possessed; whilst the object to be attained was to be effected within a limited period; or all his labour, his fatigue, his anxiety, his earnestness, and his assiduity would be of no avail. Would he not readily promise a portion of his expected reward to the friend, who could reveal to him a plan, by which the hours he had calculated upon as intervening between the time of the commencement of his undertaking, and the period for its comple-

tion, could be nearly doubled?—by which he might live as long again as those who were passing through the same apparent number of days? I will neither anticipate your reply, nor extend my letter, by dwelling on the application. You, my dear friend, have a mighty work to perform : you have a heaven to seek, a hell to shun, a wicked heart to subdue, and a corrupt nature to overcome. The space allotted you for this purpose is very short, and I point out to you a way by which it may be lengthened.

But though I cannot but consider the value of time an argument sufficiently strong in itself, without any other, to convince you of the importance of the habit which I urge upon you, yet I will not dwell upon this, as the hint alone must be sufficient to lead you to further reflection. My object is rather to direct your attention to some few circumstances connected with the practice which I am recommending, which might not have immediately occurred to you. Every one must acquiesce in the proposition that “time flies; and there-

fore we should make the best use of it :” but this has been so often repeated, that unless something else can be advanced, I fear I shall not succeed in making many converts. Would the generality of men but adopt for their motto in its best and noblest sense “ *Dum vivimus—vivamus,**” I should not now be lamenting a prevalent custom, which, however it may enslave those who are neither manly, virtuous, nor religious enough to overcome it, will, I hope, be no longer the disgrace of my friend.

Yours, very sincerely.

* Dr. Johnson in alluding to Dr. Doddridge’s extended translation of these words, which formed his family motto, has pronounced it to be the best epigram in our language. We present our readers with it, as amply justifying the high commendation of this cautious dispenser of his praises.

“ Live, while you live,” the epicure would say,

“ And seize the pleasures of the present day.”

“ Live while you live,” the sacred preacher cries ;

“ And give to God each moment as it flies.”

Lord ! in my views let both united be ;

I live in pleasure when I live to thee !

LETTER III.

To the same.

MY DEAR SIR,

THERE are very few errors which we commit, and very few sins of which we are guilty, whose bad effects are confined to their immediate consequences. These are generally seen as more directly resulting from them; and therefore they who endeavour to point out the impropriety of those errors, or the guilt of those sins, lay the greatest stress upon what appears to carry conviction with it. But there are certain collateral disadvantages (if I may so express myself), which accompany such actions as are radically and intrinsically wrong. Among these, the influence of example may be regarded as one of the most conspicuous. In order that you may more clearly comprehend my meaning, I will endeavour to point out to you one of these

evils, which is the constant attendant upon the prejudicial habit of indulging yourself in bed. Independent of the loss of time which it occasions, and the injury which it does to the health, which may be looked upon as the immediate and direct effects of this custom, it induces an *indecision of character* which is every way incompatible with energy of mind, and strength of resolution. There are very few mental qualities of greater importance in our intercourse with mankind than that of decision: your individual experience has often convinced you of this, and the calamities which have been produced by the want of it, have fallen upon several within the sphere of your acquaintance: whilst, if it were necessary, I could direct your attention to a more extensive scene, and point to you several events recorded in the page of history, which would serve still more forcibly to prove the value of this principal ingredient in the composition of a very great character. Now let me put it to your better judgment, whether the habitual laziness

in which you daily indulge, is not altogether inconsistent with this? If the only reason why you have not long ago overcome this habit, is the sacrifice the conquest would cost you, let me ask you, what is your opinion of the drunkard or the glutton who makes this his excuse? Does it tend for one moment to palliate his crime, or to lessen the disgrace which his conduct has occasioned? And though I feel very sorry to rank my friend on a level with such characters, yet I must in candour tell him, that the same principle which prevents them from abandoning their sin, operates in encouraging his; and that the absence of that determination which would enable them to discard their disgraceful propensities, has occasioned his continuance of a custom, which his conscience and his reason unite in condemning. And I must also tell you, that it is the abuse of the blessings of Providence, which in both instances attaches a peculiar turpitude to the crime which is committed. You are not a stranger to the pleasures which are always

the attendants upon an act of commendable self-denial. You, I am sure, have often felt that satisfaction which has resulted from the conquest of some tyrant passion, and have wondered how you could ever have been its slave.

“The joys of conquest are the joys of man;”—

and if you wish to enjoy all the pleasures of a triumph where its laurels are unstained with blood, and its palm of victory is unsteeped in tears, let me intreat you daily to obtain them, by manifesting a superiority to this slothful habit; and I will promise you, that not a sigh shall escape from you on the recollection of the downfall of your enemy.

Perhaps a stronger argument for the practice which I am recommending to you cannot be urged, than an appeal to your own experience. Let me inquire of you, when peculiar circumstances of business, or other sufficiently strong inducements have led you to rise earlier than usual, what have been your feelings? Have you not been surprised at your past insensibility,

that could suffer you to lose so much valuable time? Have you not despised yourself for having given way to what is generally called an *indulgence*, but which you have found to be a complete obstacle to the most exquisite of all indulgencies? Have you not, in spite of your recollections of past habits, experienced something like a feeling of contempt for those who were still locked in sleep, instead of exerting the faculties nature had bestowed on them? who were "tossed in a sea of dreams," instead of employing their judgments when they were most capable of exercise? Have you not felt the force of the sentiment,

"Tis brave to wake, lethargic souls among,
To rise, surrounded by a sinking throng?"

and in all the pride of your self-complacent superiority, have you not pitied from your heart the slaves of sloth, who were too abject even to desire their emancipation from its tyranny?

There is certainly a very peculiar selfishness about some of our enjoyments, and

though many might distinguish them by a more pleasing appellation, yet I cannot help thinking that this is a just one. How often have we heard the roaring of the wind as we have sat securely sheltered from its rage, and casting an eye of pleasure on the comforts of our apartment, how often have we drawn our chairs nearer to our fires, and thinking on the unfortunate persons who were exposed to all the fury of the boisterous ocean, hugged, as it were, our blessings closer to our bosoms, and found them more valuable than ever, because there were some who did not possess them? How often have we rattled along in a snug post-chaise, whilst the snow or rain was spending all its fury on the poor pedestrian who was getting out of the way of our vehicle, and, with a very natural exclamation of "poor man," found our situation the more enviable from the comparison; and soon exchanged our sympathies for the object of our commiseration, for more agreeable reflections on our own superior shelter?*

* This sentiment has been beautifully illustrated by Lucretius in the following lines:—

feelings desirable, only rise earlier every morning than those around you, and you will experience them in their full effect; but with this material difference, that whilst those which are produced in the manner first alluded to, are enhanced by the misfortunes of those whose situations are placed in contrast to our own, and consequently, involve something really ungenerous about them; such as are occasioned by early rising, are increased by a very justifiable pity of the insensibility of those who have them in their power, if they would but exert themselves a little to obtain them.

And what a complete contrast do such feelings as these afford, to those which are

*“ Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
Non quia vexari quemquam jucunda voluptas,
Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est.”*

Lucret. lib. 2.

Thus elegantly translated by Mr. Mason Good.

*“ How sweet to stand, when tempests tear the main,
On the firm cliff, and mark the seaman's toil:
Not that another's danger soothes the soul,
But from such toil, how sweet to feel secure.”*

experienced in rising from a bed of sloth and laziness. You are very far from being the only person, who, when I have alluded to this subject, has acknowledged himself fully alive to its importance, but confessed that he needed some stronger excitement than he had ever yet received to rouse him from his lethargy. And what is the natural consequence of such a conviction of the judgment, and such a failure in the practice? Each morning, instead of being commenced with sentiments of gratitude to that kind and paternal Being who has added another day to his former mercies, is accompanied with a bitter reflection on his again becoming the slave of a habit which he detests, but is unwilling to relinquish. A softness is thrown over the disposition altogether inconsistent with the courage and strength which the daily concerns of business require. A dissatisfaction with self is produced, which sours the temper, and which is opposed to every thing amiable and pleasing. Every object that presents itself is veiled in a gloom

which invests it in a peculiar melancholy hue, and deprives it of the power of bestowing the pleasures that it may be really calculated to afford. The mutual endearments of the social circle are suspended; and very often the brows of the more aged are knit into a frown at the artless cheerfulness of the young, arising from an envy of their happiness, a near resemblance to which might have been enjoyed by themselves. The day thus commenced cannot be expected to be spent with satisfaction, or to be finished with self-approbation.

Before I conclude, my dear G——, I would also remind you of another effect which early rising produces. The day appears to have considerably advanced when others are commencing it, and on looking back, during its later hours, it seems to have comprized a much longer space than it really has done. The time that has been *gained* in the morning deserves this appellation. It has been snatched from sleep, which did not really require it, but is so

covetous a creature that it will take all that it can get. As you look back with self-complacency to the morning hours, the effect is something similar to that produced by a vista. The objects at the further extremity appear to be at a much greater distance than they actually are; whilst the mind on each retrospective view, derives a new source of satisfaction from the delusive idea of our having passed over more ground, and advanced much farther than we really have. If this description should not now be very intelligible to you, I hope an experimental acquaintance with the sensations described, will in a few days render its meaning perfectly clear.

Yours sincerely.

LETTER IV

To the same.

MY DEAR SIR,

IT has often been a source of regret to you that the attention which your mercantile pursuits required, and the large proportion of your time which they occupied, in a great measure precluded you from the enjoyment of those literary pleasures which were so congenial to your taste, and so natural a result of your excellent education. Indeed, I have not unfrequently heard you express a wish, and that with a degree of earnestness which seemed very likely to end in a determination, to give up your present lucrative connections, and to devote the remainder of your life to an uninterrupted participation in your favourite amusements. But however much I may feel inclined to sympathize with you in admiring the objects of your taste, and

however anxious I might be for you to possess the power of indulging it to a greater extent; yet I could never advise my friend to suffer a propensity, however innocent in itself, or intellectual in its nature, to induce him to forget the duties which he owes to a numerous family, and to be regardless of the folly that would mark his conduct, if he were to throw away his present opportunities of usefulness, and materially diminish an influence that has hitherto been beneficially employed, merely to enjoy the gratifications which the mental powers might require. The ancient writers have told us that “a man of business may *talk of philosophy*, and a man of leisure *practise it*.” But I should be very sorry indeed if its *discussion* were confined to the former class, or its *influence* exclusively felt by the latter. Since the pristine curse has been extended from generation to generation, and the food of man has been obtained by the sweat of his brow, daily labour has become the lot of a large proportion of the human race; and

the varied occupations of commercial or professional engagements, only serve as a milder infliction of the sentence. Nor can I help reminding you of the incalculable proportion of happiness which would be lost, if diligent application and industrious assiduity did not occupy a very considerable space in the life of man. But if these employments tended to check those mental energies, and to annihilate that exercise of the reasoning faculties which distinguish us from the brutes; if they limited that enlargement of comprehension, that extent of view, that improvement of the judgment, and that refinement of the taste, which philosophy, when properly understood, is calculated to produce; we should very soon leave that high station in the order of created beings which we at present maintain, and sink below the level of the subjects of mere instinct—the slaves of our passions, and the victims of our lusts.

That there is, in fact, nothing inconsistent between the cultivation of mind, and the details of business, is very capable of proof.

And though we generally find that those men who have devoted their lives, and directed their attention, to the study of that which is necessary to qualify them to exercise what is designated by the name of a *profession*, have been most distinguished for their literary attainments, (the natural result of their being more conversant with books,) yet the minuter parts of their employments are very similar in their mere mechanical properties to the occupations of men of business, and require the assistance of as little of the intellectual energies as the ordinary avocations of the tradesman. Indeed, there is a certain something about these occupations every way favourable for eliciting mental activity. The collision of opposite sentiments, the employments of each returning day, the mental as well as corporeal exercise that is required, and the incitements to perseverance which are offered, stimulate the reasoning faculties, and, like the muscular exertions of the wrestler, strengthen each nerve by its successive employment.

I need not take up much of your time

to convince you of the truth of this ; indeed you have the advantage of me here, for you have long found by experience the correctness of what I am endeavouring theoretically to prove. The engagements of a man of business are those which he voluntarily undertakes, in order to obtain some proposed object. Either the inherent love of employment, the claims of relative connexions, or an ambitious desire of pre-eminence, afford the first incitements to exertion, and the constant inducements to perseverance. Some end is steadily kept in view, whilst the mind, eager to avail itself of every thing that can serve as an auxiliary to its accomplishment, is ever on the alert for something to assist its plans. If the object proposed be gained, another instantly presents itself, and thus the first motives still continue to operate, and keep alive an emulative spirit. But it does not follow that because a constant succession of exertions is the direct road to the completion of his purposes, that the man of business is never to pause, and to pluck a

few of the flowers that tempt him in his progress. The only evil which can attend such an indulgence, is, when it interferes with the time which should be devoted to the calls of duty, and which is indispensably necessary for the accomplishment of his original purpose.

Now, to you, my dear friend, I know that I shall be offering a valuable piece of advice, and doing an essential service, by impressing on your memory, that, circumstanced as you are at present, the only method by which you can indulge in your favourite and laudable recreation, is by withdrawing a portion of those hours which are now devoted to some other purpose, and reserving it for this. Your mercantile engagements completely absorb every minute of the day, and the pleasures of the family circle and social party generally occupy the evening. Where then can you look? If I point you to a part of your life which is spent in a manner that is useless—that is worse than useless—is prejudicial to your mind and destructive of your health,

I shall not be asking too much of you, if I only solicit you for one week, to try the experiment which I would recommend. *Rise two hours earlier every morning.* Calculate this. It gives you fourteen hours in a week—an additional day—and your most sanguine wishes would be satisfied by one-seventh of your time being devoted to literary pursuits. I only fear that you have started at the thought of allowing them so much; if so, my dear friend, let me remind you, that after having given you the time, I accompany the present with no stipulations,—it is your own; and you may use it as you please.

But before I bid you once more farewell, in order to remove every scruple from your mind respecting the propriety of devoting so much time in the manner I have mentioned, I must beg you to remember, that no hesitation will ever be felt on account of its withdrawing your attention from the concerns of business and the calls of duty. It would be a portion of the day hitherto altogether lost; and you will never

have those scruples which you now probably sometimes feel, as to the propriety of your being thus engaged. And should another doubt ever arise, as to the compatibility of mental improvement and intellectual pursuits with the details of business, I will candidly acknowledge to you, that on a comparison of myself as a man of leisure, with you as a man of business, I consider the advantages to be on your side. With those, whose attention to literature is purely speculative, there is great danger of its terminating in mere theory. You will not mistake my meaning by supposing that I now allude to the passing literature of the present day. I refer to those philosophical acquirements, and that species of knowledge, which are only to be obtained by resorting to the best of writers and the wisest of men. The study of their works will never interfere with your other engagements; but, on the contrary, will afford you an acquaintance with general truths, which are only of real service as they are ultimately applicable to practical purposes. It will

store your mind with that "knowledge" which, when exercised in the concerns of life, becomes indeed "*power*;"—it will furnish your memory with those immutable principles that form the basis of all those rules of conduct, the adherence to which will induce a steadiness of mental resolve, and a vigour of judgment, which unexpected occurrences, calculated to stagger the weak and confound the wavering, will never be able to disconcert. And let me remind you, that you possess another great advantage over the mere man of genius. You will return to your literary pleasures with a thirst for their enjoyment to which he is often a stranger. You will feel nothing of that "*tedium vitæ*" which so frequently presses upon his spirits; and in the alternate vicissitude of mental speculation and practical application, you will gain all the knowledge that springs from the former, and command all the advantages that result from the latter.

I am, &c.

Yours very sincerely.

LETTER V.

To Mrs. G.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I SCARCELY need begin by assuring you, that I feel no small degree of pleasure in adding the name of another lady to the list of my epistolary correspondents, and more particularly so, under such circumstances as have procured me the honor of now addressing you. It certainly was with some considerable satisfaction that I understood that my late letters to my friend had not been confined to himself; and however scrupulous I might have been in some cases about the perusal of such productions being extended to those to whom they were not originally addressed, yet on *such* a subject, every thing that could offer itself in the shape of an objection would be at once dismissed. Letters in general, when they are really what they pretend to be, the ge-

nuine expression of the sentiments of one heart designed to win their way to another, lose much of their interest when read by a third person : and we have seen many instances of the injudiciousness of those biographers, who have published much that had better have remained concealed, through a foolish expectation, that whatever proceeded from the pen of their favourite must interest the public. Indeed, in the present instance, the attention which appears to have been directed in your family to the subject of early rising, at once induces me to hope, that what I have already written has not been ineffectual, and encourages me to comply with your request, by communicating to you my sentiments with regard to its application to yourself in particular.

Several of the remarks which I have already made, will apply to you as the mistress of a family, as well as to my friend as its head. But if I have considered it necessary to recommend the practice of early rising to him, as a man of business, I feel it to be a subject equally deserving your

consideration, as *the mother of a family*, to whom it is indeed peculiarly important. If the more public duties of life devolve on *man*, there are private ones of no less weight which are exclusively confined to *woman*; and whatever superiority may in general be attached to the more obtrusive occupations of *our* sex, perhaps the balance of comfort is regulated by the less specious engagements of *yours*. It is in vain that we devote ourselves to the concerns of business, that we are fortunate in our speculations and successful in our exertions; in vain that we toil from day to day to augment our wealth, unless the pleasures which it can purchase, and the advantages it can command, are wisely regulated by *you*. Our labours in the Exchange, or in the Mart, in the office, the counting-house, or the shop, are stimulated by the desire of gaining those comforts which money can procure; but it is *you* who must render them truly deserving of such an appellation, by the wisdom that is displayed in the management of the domestic economy, and the attention that is direct-

ed to increase the endearments of home. The duties which devolve upon us are indeed widely different, but they are suited to the comparative strength or weakness of each. Their diversity forms one of their most pleasing features: and the very contrariety of their nature becomes a link of connection between them. And if ever I should be led to suffer pity for a person's ignorance, to assume any of the characteristics of contempt, it would be in that opinion which I should form of the man, who, proud of his own self-importance, and great in his own estimation, affected to despise what he gratuitously deemed the *insignificant* employments of woman, and by a consummation of meanness and cowardice, upbraided her with moving in a more contracted sphere than his own. If such be his sentiments, he has yet to learn, that the pleasure of society, and the harmony of domestic life, are dependent upon that sex whose smiles he can never deserve, and whose frowns he pretends to disregard.

Though you might very properly charge

us with interfering unnecessarily with your department of duty, if we were to presume to scrutinize into the minutiae of those family arrangements, the management of which is properly confined to yourselves, yet we cannot be insensible either to the advantageous results which are produced by a well-conducted system, or the inconveniences which arise from an ill-organized plan of domestic economy. Though we may not investigate all the parts, and pry into all the movements of the machine, we cannot be unconscious of its operations; and affecting as they do our every-day comforts, we must be sensible either of their failure or success of accomplishing their designs. The secret cause—(if it be right to style it so when writing to one to whom it has long been *revealed*, and in a great measure acted upon)—the secret cause of all that disorder and confusion which prevail in many families, is the want of a systematic arrangement, which will always correct and remove the evil. We often see a vast deal of bustle, an uninterrupted succession of exertions, and a

continued round of occupations, and yet scarcely any thing appears to be effected: or, if done, it is so ill timed and so out of place, that one would almost wish it had been left unattempted. It is the want of method and the want of time that occasion this. Plans are formed, but no thought is previously bestowed upon them, because the design is resolved upon when the execution is needed. And even when there does appear something like wisdom in the intention, some unexpected occurrence intervenes, some hinderance is presented, which disarranges every thing, and throws all into confusion. Let me, my dear madam, ennoble your truly honourable and useful daily avocations, by comparing your family to a little commonwealth, and place you at its head; investing you with the combined duties of legislative enactment and judicial execution. Let me suppose all your anxieties directed to the formation of wise laws for its guidance, and all your faculties engaged in devising suitable measures for its government; and that your personal

influence was so necessary, and your constant superintendence so important, that they could not be dispensed with. Let me imagine your active employments to be so varied, that it required all the wisdom of pre-conceived arrangement to guide, and all the self-possession resulting from previous deliberation to direct them. And what, I would ask you, would be the course you ought to adopt? Would it not be to obtain these advantages, by appropriating the earliest part of the day to consider of the means best suited to the end to be obtained? But you are actually in the precise situation which I have pictured to myself; and only let me put it to your better judgment, how much would you gain if you were to devote two or three hours of the morning, in preparing for the active employments of the day?

I may perhaps have allotted too large a space of time for previous deliberation. You may tell me, that it requires no such forethought to manage the concerns of a family; and that I am recommending time

to be spent in inactivity, which might be turned to much better advantage. You are probably right. But you cannot refuse to grant me, that the time which would be thus gained would enable you to get through the duties of the day, in a manner much more consistent with the principles of good order and proper arrangement. The activity of mind and body that is felt in the morning, would render your occupations much less irksome than they must often prove at a later period of the day. Those employments which succeeded would be conducted better, for however trifling some of them may appear, if they are worth doing at all, they are worth doing well. You will have set an example to your servants and domestics, which will produce an effect that entreaty or threats could never have obtained. Surely no servant would lie in bed when she knew that her mistress was up and active. A principle of shame would operate with all its force, and render her incapable of self-indulgence, when she would receive such a pointed practical re-

proof. You would provide for the casualties of the day: unexpected hinderances would not disarrange your plans: unlooked for interruptions would still leave you much time upon hand. And one great advantage would be the result. The surplus hours, (ah! surplus hours!! my dear madam, for I must believe that you have affixed a few *mental* marks of exclamation after these words,) would afford an opportunity for intellectual improvement. Your favourite authors would again be read. The pursuits of your earlier days, before the cares of a family and the anxieties of a mother were known, would again be indulged in: and thus would you render yourself even still better qualified than at present for your favourite employment,—the instruction of your children.

With every sentiment of respect,

I am, madam,

Yours very sincerely.

LETTER VI.

To the same.

MY DEAR MADAM,

CERTAIN arguments which appear to have very little that is personal in their nature, or individual in their application, may be urged with effect, when appealing to the judgments of some persons, and endeavouring to interest their feelings. The most forcible reasons which can be advanced in favour of a particular line of conduct, are not such as are peculiarly calculated to affect *themselves*, so much as those which are connected with the happiness of *others*, in whose welfare they are greatly interested. This is perhaps more observable with regard to parents than any other description of characters, and is particularly the case with the *mother* of a family. If you can but convince her that the happiness of her children is affected by what is recommended, although its adop-

tion may require a considerable degree of self-denial and personal inconvenience, yet such a forcible motive operates so powerfully upon her feelings that she cannot resist its constraining influence. The fabulous disinterestedness of the Pelican, which is represented as feeding its young with the blood which it has drawn from its own breast, is more than realized in the mental suffering which a fond parent often undergoes, in order to promote the welfare of her offspring; and her constant solicitude and anxiety on their account, form the most pleasing answer to the scripture interrogation, "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?"

If the reasons adduced in my last Letter should have failed to produce their designed effect, I hope that those which may be advanced in this will be more successful. I feel that I am venturing upon ground which seems to possess a certain hallowed sanctity, and on which the foot of a stranger may leave a sacrilegious im-

pression. An interference with the education of the younger branches of a family, is often looked upon as conveying a tacit rebuke and a disguised censure. But I will not act in so covert a manner; I will boldly confess to you that I mean to convey an open rebuke and an undisguised censure. And I do think, my dear Madam, that you will fail in a very essential part of your duty as a parent, if you neglect to invite your children, by the influence of your example, or to urge them by the authority of your commands, to appreciate the value of the habit of early rising.

Much of your attention has been frequently directed to the best method of impressing upon the minds of your youthful charge the value of time. You have endeavoured to enforce upon them a sense of its shortness, and of the necessity of improving each moment ere it be fled, and numbered "with the years beyond the flood."* You have accompanied your exhortations with all the earnestness which a

* Young.

consciousness of the importance of the subject could create, and with all the tenderness which an anxious parent could be expected to feel. And you have often considered your own time profitably employed, when searching for the most effectual arguments and the most successful persuasions, to convince others of what experience had taught yourself. But let me remind you, my dear madam, that you have neglected one of the most powerful and convincing means of producing the wished-for result that lies within your reach. If they who are influenced by your example, and willing to obey your injunctions; who are narrowly watching all the minutiae of your conduct, and comparing the probable excellence of your theory with the certain facts of your practice, with an acuteness of observation that you sometimes little suspect; if they were to see by your daily habits how much you felt the indispensable necessity of that improvement of time which you had enforced upon them; that you denied yourself what they had been accustomed to regard

as an allowable gratification; and if they were to experience, by an obedience to your commands, that they were every morning gaining a few of those hours which you had taught them to look upon as so precious, they would have the value of time brought home to them in a manner that no representations, however just, could so eloquently convey; and no arguments, however irresistible, could so convincingly prove.

There is an error which young persons are very apt to fall into, (and indeed it is very far from being confined to them,) which it should be a great object with a parent to correct. They look upon the larger portions of time as being of considerable importance, and attach to the names by which they are distinguished, ideas of a comparatively commensurate value. If you were to talk to them of shortening their existence, by blotting out a certain number of years, or even of months, they would shudder at the thought, and be alarmed at the suggestion. But if you were to propose that a definite number of moments, or mi-

minutes, or perhaps of hours, should be taken away, though they might hesitate at the novelty of the surrender, yet they would soon console themselves by thinking on the insignificance of each individual particle, and would yield to the deprivation with but little reluctance. But the man whose capacious mind embraces all the component parts of any given subject, and who minutely examines the details of atoms with the same facility as he includes in one comprehensive grasp the extended mass which they form, would reject such a proposal as being equally inconsistent with reason, as that which appeared so to the meaner capacity of the child. And if you would produce the same convictions, you must infuse the same principles which lead to them. Tell your youthful charge that the shore which surrounds their native land, and which has resisted for ages the rude attacks of the boisterous ocean, is composed of *grains* of sand; that the cable which prevents the floating bulwarks of their country from dashing against the rocks

that threaten them, consists of single fibres of flax; that the lucid path which circumscribes the heavens, is produced by an assemblage of countless stars; that the largest numbers are formed of units; and that the lengthened space of succeeding ages which extends from the morning of creation to the present hour, is made up of single moments;—you will thus make them real economists of their time; you will render them avaricious, where avarice is no sin; you will make them parsimonious, where parsimony is a virtue. Teach them to calculate for themselves. Let them find the sum in hours, to which a minute daily gained will amount. Let their computations prove to them, “that the difference between rising between five and seven o’clock in the morning for the space of forty years, supposing a person to go to bed at the same hour at night, is nearly equivalent to the addition of ten years to his life:” *—and then reverse the question. Propose

* *Vide* Doddridge’s Family Expositor.

to them, that instead of gaining ten years, the same period be expunged; that it be given up to sleep and inaction: and you will convince them by the simplest rules of arithmetic, what a treasure may be acquired, and what a loss may be sustained.

You are well aware of the great importance which is to be attached to the early formation of useful habits, and how materially the comfort of the subsequent part of our lives depends upon such having become familiar to us, as promote our moral and intellectual improvement. Man has been called "a bundle of habits;" and that parent will act the most wisely, who takes care, that so far as she can assist in the formation of this bundle, it shall be composed of such habits only as her experience has taught her to approve, and her judgment to allow. And you as a mother have a very considerable influence in this respect. The maxim of Solomon, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," was not one of temporary application, but still retains all

its original force and truth. If it be in your power to regulate, in any degree, those principles of action which operate on the minds of your children, and which, after the repetition of their influence, assume the force of custom, affording not only a mere facility, but also an inclination and an impulse to perform; it is of the highest importance that you should see them rightly and judiciously directed. If you are convinced of the duty and advantages of the practice of early rising which I have been recommending, and if you are willing to allow that its neglect is not simply an absence of positive satisfaction, but even a commission of actual sin, you cannot hesitate for one moment about the propriety of addicting your offspring at an early age to this beneficial and salutary habit. And its being thus encouraged in childhood has a peculiar advantage connected with it, independent of the extent of time which would be gained, and which I have already noticed. If the sensual indulgence (for I cannot distinguish it by a milder term) of

lying longer in bed than the necessities of nature require, becomes difficult to conquer in proportion to the time it has been cherished, the most easy and effectual method of subduing it, is to check it before it has assumed so formidable a character as to need the exercise of any considerable degree of self-denial to overcome it. If you accustom your children to rise early, the practice will soon resemble instinct more than habit; and appear to possess the natural properties of the one, rather than the acquired qualities of the other. There will be no necessity for the operation of the will; *intention* will hardly be required; thought will not be needed; and the moving principle will become *mechanical* rather than *rational*. They will rise when they wake with the same readiness as they retired to rest when weary: and as I have sometimes observed, that the threat of sending them to bed before their accustomed time has instantly enforced obedience, and when insufficient, that the execution of it has appeared a grievous punishment; if

you wish at any future period to correct them, perhaps an equally effectual mode would be, to deny them the gratification of rising at their usual hour.

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

To the same.

MY DEAR MADAM,

IN my last letter I confined my observations on the pernicious habit of long indulgence in bed, to its effects upon the mind rather than the body, though its consequences are very prejudicial to both; and on a recollection of the close connection and intimate sympathy which exist between them, you will be inclined to regard any diminution of bodily strength as affecting, to a greater or less degree, the energy of the mental powers. Nor can I help referring the long train of maladies with which so many are at present afflicted, and which, in the absence of a more distinguishing and specific term, are all ranked under the general title of *nervous*, to the immoderate portion of time that is spent in bed. It may be a very difficult task to trace these

disorders to their source, and hence so few of them are effectually removed by the use of medicine; yet they all evidently originate in a state of corporeal debility, which occasions a mental relaxation, and this twofold weakness produces those painful and distressing sensations, which render their unhappy victims the object of pity and commiseration. And if any remedy can be found to re-establish, however gradually, the enfeebled powers of the body, the disordered faculties of the mind will, at the same time, be invigorated and restored: and it is certainly of very great importance, that those habits should be formed in children, which are calculated to prevent their becoming the subjects of these very generally prevalent, and apparently increasing complaints. It is true, that scarcely any are willing to allow that the cause I have alluded to is instrumental in producing such an effect; but this is very far from proving that I am wrong. The evil has crept upon them so slowly, the malady has become formidable by such imperceptible advances,

that they have not been aware of its approach, nor can they now discover how it was introduced, though too well assured of its alarming progress.

Do we find that our hardy ancestors ever complained of such disorders as we now lament? Do we read of nervous affections a few centuries ago? Or, if you suspect whether the same disease may not have been distinguished by another appellation, do we find any thing at all symptomatic of the complaint? Modern luxury may have concurred with some other circumstances in producing this, but I believe that the pernicious habit of continuing an unnecessary length of time in bed, has been one of the principal causes. Our forefathers rose at four, but many of their degenerated progeny lie till eight. The consequence of this, is a general relaxation of the nervous system, the muscles becoming unstrung, the spirits depressed, the mental faculties weakened, attended by all the melancholy accompaniments of hypocondriac affections. "This tyrannical habit," says a

forcible modern writer,* “attacks life in its essential powers ; it makes the blood forget its way, and creep lazily along the veins ; it relaxes the fibres, unstrings the nerves, evaporates the animal spirits, saddens the soul, dulls the fancy, subdues and stupifies man to such a degree that he, the lord of the creation, hath no appetite for any thing in it, loathes labour, yawns for want of thought, trembles at the sight of a spider, and in the absence of that, at the creatures of his own gloomy imagination.”

I am not speaking speculatively here. I might be considered to be going out of my proper sphere, if I were to attempt to prove the truth of my assertions, either by shewing that such a result must, from our physical organization, necessarily follow, or by entering into a particular detail of the manner in which it operates upon the body ; though I might give you quotations from

* Robinson's Morning Exercises. No. 1, Industry.—The author would take the liberty of recommending this “Morning Exercise” to his readers, to which he was indebted for many valuable hints in the composition of these Letters.

most of our great medical writers, which would serve to corroborate my opinions, and establish the correctness of my sentiments.* But I can appeal to facts, which are not only worth recording, but also worth remembering. It has been remarked by one

* "Nothing," says Dr. Cheyne, "can be more prejudicial to tender constitutions, studious and contemplative persons, than lying long in bed, lolling and soaking in sheets after any one is distinctly awake, or has slept a due and reasonable time. It necessarily thickens the juices, enervates the solids, and weakens the constitution. A free open air is a kind of cold bath, especially after rising out of a warm bed, and consequently makes the circulation brisker and more complete, and braces up the solids, when lying in bed dissolves and soaks them in moisture. 'This is evident from the appetite and hunger those that rise early feel, beyond that which they get by lying long in bed.'—*Essay on Health and Long Life*, b. iii. s. 6.

Mr. Wesley, in his celebrated sermon "on the Duty and Advantage of Early Rising," observes, that "one common effect of either sleeping too long, or lying too long in bed, is weakness of sight, particularly that weakness which is of the nervous kind. When I was young my sight was remarkably weak. Why is it stronger now than it was forty years ago? I impute this principally to the blessing of God, who fits us for whatever he calls us to; but undoubtedly, the outward mean which he has been pleased to bless, was the rising early every morning."

of our judges* who availed himself of the opportunities which a long course of practice at the bar and experience on the bench afforded, that whenever he inquired into the habits of life of any witnesses who had attained a considerable age, he invariably found that they had long been, and still were, early risers, though in many other respects their practices differed, and were sometimes directly contrary. This is a fact worth more than a thousand speculative arguments; it carries with it a conviction that renders further proof or further comment unnecessary. You may probably recollect the concise and excellent rules which the celebrated old Parr laid down for the preservation of health: and when I remind you that he attained the astonishing age of one hundred and fifty-two years, his advice upon the subject will possess a peculiar value. “Keep your head cool by temperance, your feet warm by exercise. *Rise early, and go to bed soon.* Never eat till you are hungry, nor drink but when nature requires it.”

* Lord Mansfield.

As an instance, however, of the good effects of the habit of early rising, even upon persons afflicted with the maladies which I have supposed the neglect of it to produce, I will relate to you the case of a young lady who had deeply felt their baneful influence. She was reduced to such extreme weakness, as to require assistance in walking across the room; and imagining so enfeebled a state required a larger portion of sleep, she generally lay eight or nine hours, but in the morning found herself as relaxed and fatigued as at night, and unable to dress without the relief of resting two or three times. On reading Wesley's sermon on early rising, she was so perfectly convinced of the propriety of the reasoning, that by rising gradually earlier every morning she soon lessened the time of sleep to six hours; her strength daily increased, and by persevering in this practice, together with cold bathing and moderate exercise, the disorders which had so long afflicted her were removed; and deeply sensible of the great mental and

bodily advantage of early rising, only regrets that the habit had not been formed at a much earlier period of her life.*

I cannot conclude these observations without transcribing a very interesting little poem, written by the ingenious and learned Beloe. It will amuse you more than any lengthened quotations from medical writers, and your children may sooner commit it to memory, and will perhaps retain it longer, than any arguments, however weighty or just they might be.

THE PURSUIT OF HEALTH.

One April morn reclin'd in bed,
Just at the hour when dreams are true,
A Fairy form approach'd my head,
Smiling beneath her mantle blue;

"Fie, fie," she cried, "why sleep so long,
When she, the Nymph you dearly love,
Now roves the vernal flowers among,
And waits for you in yonder grove?"

* This account has appeared in some of the last editions of Wesley's Sermon.

" Hark ! you may hear her cherub voice,
The voice of Health is sweet and clear,
Yes—you may hear the birds rejoice
In symphony her arbour near ! "

I rose and hasten'd to the grove,
With eager steps and anxious mind ;
I rose the Elfin's truth to prove,
And hop'd the promis'd Nymph to find ;

My fairy took me by the hand,
And cheerfully we stepp'd along,
She stopp'd but on the new-plough'd land,
To hear the russet woodlark's song ;

We reach'd the grove—I look'd around,
My fairy was no longer near ;
But of her voice I knew the sound,
As thus she whisper'd in my ear—

" The Nymph, fair Health, you came to find
Within those precincts loves to dwell ;
Her breath now fills the balmy wind,
This path will lead you to her cell."

I bended to the primrose low,
And ask'd if Health might there reside ;
" She left me," said the flower, " but now
For yonder violet's purple pride."

I question'd next the violet's queen,
Where buxom Health was to be found?
She told me that she late was seen
With cowslips toying on the ground.

Then thrice I kiss'd the cowslips pale
And in their dew-drops bath'd my face,
I told them all my tender tale,
And begg'd their aid coy Health to trace.

"From us," exclaim'd a lowly flower,
"The Nymph has many a day been gone,
But now she rests within yon bower
Where yonder hawthorn blooms alone."

Quick to that bower I ran, I flew,
And yet no Nymph I there could find,
But fresh the breeze of Morning blew,
And Spring was gay and Flora kind:

If I return'd sedate and slow,
What if the Nymph I could not see?
The blush that pass'd along my brow
Was proof of her divinity!

And still her votary to prove,
And still her dulcet smiles to share,
I'll tread the fields—I'll haunt the grove,
With untir'd steps and fondest care,

O Sprite below'd! vouchsafe to give
A boon, a precious boon, to me ;
Within thy influence let me live,
And sometimes too thy beauty see—

So shall the Muse in nobler verse
And strength renew'd exulting sing,
Thy praise—thy charms—thy power rehearse,
And sweep with bolder hand the string!

To you, my dear Madam, who feel so much of the tenderness of a mother; who are so susceptible of her anxieties, and so elated with her pleasures; who do not display your affection by shedding a thousand tears over the childish sorrows of your offspring, without a single effort to promote their comfort, nor waste that time in fruitless forebodings of probable calamities, which might be much better occupied in such prudent exertions as would prevent their occurrence; to you these remarks will not be unavailing, offered as they are with all the candour which friendship could prompt, and with all the sincerity which a participation to a certain degree, in your

own affection for your children, could dictate. What will be my satisfaction, if the next time I visit your hospitable mansion, when, perhaps, the artless freedom of my little favourites is exchanged for the modest blush which the consciousness of riper age may produce; when the unsuspecting confidence of childhood has been succeeded by the retiring caution of maturer years; and when the first buddings of the opening mind have expanded beneath the rays of maternal love, and displayed the characteristic tints and distinguishing colours, which will be only deepened by the succeeding seasons of advancing life: what will be my satisfaction, if to all the other sources of pleasure which I have found under your roof, should be added that of perceiving that my efforts to establish so important, so valuable, so necessary a habit, have not been in vain. How shall I be gratified, if, when I once more join your domestic circle, instead of having the opportunity afforded me, as before, of devoting my early hours exclusively to solitary

meditation, I should be permitted to see the interesting group again assembled around their mother, their countenances glowing with all the animation which health can bestow, and their minds prepared to receive her instructions, by that peculiar aptitude for thought, and liveliness and vigour of intellect, which the exhilarating air of morning produces. I have not yet forgotten, and with pleasure do I anticipate the repetition of those hours, when I have joined you in your delightful employment; when I have seen the deep interest with which you watched the countenances, and the scrutiny with which you endeavoured to read the hearts of your youthful charge; with what anxiety each movement of their infant minds was noticed; how you listened to the expression of their sentiments, which served at once to mark the unfoldings of their thoughts, and to reward your care; how desirous you were to check the first symptoms of rising passion, and to repress the first ebullition of each evil disposition; how every virtuous wish was fostered, every

religious feeling strengthened; how repeatedly the mind was led from the immediate object of its contemplations, to considerations of higher importance, and subjects of everlasting moment; how often, by an unexpected remark, some great and valuable truth was insinuated, finding its way to the heart through those avenues which unsuspecting confidence had laid open, and impressed upon the memory by the earnestness with which it was conveyed; while that affection which gratitude prompted towards yourself, was diverted into a new channel, and led to "the Giver of every good and perfect gift;" while that deference to your wisdom which your maturer experience invited, was directed towards Him in whom are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" while that sincerity which elicited the ingenuous confessions that opened to you the secrets of their hearts, was made the instrument of exciting a more unreserved reliance on Him who "readeth, and searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of

men:" and while the anxious hope was often felt, and the earnest wish was sometimes whispered, that the mother's watchful eye might long be upon them, and her sheltering protection be extended over them, they were directed to one "whose years fail not," "with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," and were induced to offer up the earnest petition "our Father, wilt *thou* not from this time be the guide of our youth?"

With the most earnest prayers that we may all be the children of such a parent, and under the direction of such a guide,

believe me, my dear Madam,

to be, yours very sincerely.

LETTER VIII.

To Miss Charlotte G.

MY DEAR CHARLOTTE,

DID you think that my promise was quite forgotten, or like many others that have been made on similar occasions, suffered to expire with the momentary impulse that led to it? If so, I have the pleasure of telling you that you were mistaken: that I am too selfish a being to allow myself by breaking my own engagement, to be deprived of the satisfaction which I shall derive from your keeping yours. When you asked as a favour, that our acquaintance should not terminate with our personal intimacy, I felt a much greater inclination to grant your request, than you could have done to make it. And now that we can no longer sit together, and read our favourite authors, amuse ourselves with our darling poets, or, rambling through your frequented

walks, peruse the book of nature, and mark, with equal admiration, some of its most pleasing characters,—I often think in my solitary musings, of the converse which used to cheat the distance of our strolls; and paint with vivid colours, though softened by a mellower tint, the lovely scenes which surround your interesting dwelling.

You have sometimes asked me, when an unexpected opening has afforded a command of distant landscape scenery, and extorted from me a sudden expression of agreeable surprize bordering upon rapture, how such feelings were consistent with my advancing years, and I think you added—with my sex? You have told me you had imagined that the beauties of nature had but few charms for us; and however the ardent feelings of youth might impel us to admire them, you thought that the cares of business and our necessary intercourse with the world, extinguished those early sensibilities, and led us to look back with contempt on what we were now inclined to call

the dreams of fancy. But I believe you were partly convinced of your mistake, when I reminded you of several of your favourite authors, who retained, till the close of their lives, the same attachment for the beauties of nature as they had felt in their younger years. I am sure we should both of us little envy the man, who has never yet enjoyed that pure satisfaction which arises from the meditations of a leisure hour, spent amid the tranquillity of rural scenery; who has never yet read the lesson which every opening bud and leaf present, and felt the moral in his heart; who has never gazed upon the varied beauties which are displayed around him, and feasting on the grandeur of the scene till his senses asked no more, ascended above these sublunary objects, and cried, "my Father made them all;" who has never seen in the shades of the landscape, or heard in the songs of the grove, something more than a subject for the painter's canvas or the poet's lyre; who has never discovered that from the stately oak which stretches across the glade, to the

minutest bud that is just bursting into being, there is a wisdom of design, and an omnipotence in execution, that mark the hand of the Deity; that every leaf is a candidate for his wonder, and every fibre a subject for his astonishment; whose passions have never subsided in the stillness of a summer's eve, whose sterner thoughts have never been relaxed by the softening influence of the stealing twilight; whose "strife of working intellect," whose stir of "hopes ambitious," and whose conflict of contending wishes, have never yielded to the uninterrupted silence which seemed to upbraid his folly, and to endeavour to allay the tumult of his breast; who has never inhaled the balmy breath of morning;—

But, I believe, I am going too far. I fear I shall be venturing where you will not join in the censure through fear of its reverting upon yourself. I have reminded you of your inquiry with regard to our deficiency, and your suspicion of our insensibility even when placed amid some of the most pleasing combinations of the beauties

of nature; and permit me to remind you also, of the expressions of astonishment which sometimes escaped my lips, when I referred to your indifference to the loveliest scenes, and the richest landscapes which the country can afford. I need hardly tell you, my dear Charlotte, that I allude to those enchanting beauties which the morning presents. With all your enthusiasm for the charms of nature, how can you suffer yourself to lose the opportunity of enjoying them in the greatest perfection? I can hardly give you credit for your sincerity, while you altogether neglect, or shew so much inattention to what has so high a claim upon your admiration. Do you know what you lose, by spending those hours in sleep which might be devoted to the most pleasing and most substantial enjoyment? Only recollect the peculiar fascinations of the morning. Think upon the feelings which they are calculated to excite. Picture to yourself—(and if you imagine I have painted in too glowing colours, rise to-morrow and compare it with the reality, and

if there be one tint too vivid, one touch too flattering, destroy the painting and forget the artist,)—picture to yourself a summer morning. The sun rising in all his native majesty, shedding his beams with a gentle influence, which, whilst it predicts their increasing power, teaches us to value their present mildness. Every object as it catches the first rays of “the powerful king of day,” appearing to smile at his approach. The lengthened shadows that shoot across the meadow, slowly diminishing as he advances. The clouds that seemed to check his early progress, gradually yielding to his growing might, and “illumed with fluid gold,” disappearing amid “the kindling azure.” The glistening-dew drops, “stars of morning,” impearling every leaf. Vegetation clothed in a richer verdure, and the variegated flowers in livelier hues. The groves resounding with the melody of the feathered tribes, who appear susceptible of gratitude for the return of the opening day. Whilst every animal is in motion, and seems to feel

a new satisfaction in the exercise of its active powers and the revival of its capacities for enjoyment.

You are aware how much of the pleasure or the pain that is experienced on the consideration of particular objects, depends upon the recollections with which they are connected. Comparatively very little inherent beauty can be found in any; and those which we have regarded at one time as the fairest and most agreeable, we may have looked upon at another with indifference, or even dislike. The seasons of the year, and the time of the day, have often considerable influence in producing this contrariety of effect; and different minds are variously affected by the same circumstances. One man regards the bursting foliage of spring, and the universal verdure which then surrounds him, as the finest scenery which nature can afford; whilst another gazes with rapture on the mingled tints of autumn, and the varied shades of colour which then diversify the grove. One

delights to behold the rising sun throwing his beams across the smiling landscape, whilst another loves the parting ray that bids it a temporary farewell. But whatever may be the variety of taste, and without intruding upon you my own (perhaps antiquated) sentiments, I cannot but think that the associations which are connected with morning are much more exhilarating and more beneficial, than the melancholy feelings which the sombre shades of twilight produce. It is in the power of a creative fancy, to make the reflections which are excited much more agreeable than the images that lead to them. And it is in the morning, when the spirits are elated, and the disposition cheerful, that we separate those circumstances, which when combined with the objects that surround us give them a deforming aspect, and unite in the imagination what nature has kept distinct, adding to the intrinsic beauty of the scenery the most interesting associations and pleasing ideal connections.

But in you, who are such an admirer of poetry, and so many of whose mental associations are connected with the descriptions contained in your favourite authors, and whose solitary musings are so often enlivened by the recollection of them, the indulgence in the pernicious habit of throwing away so valuable a portion of the day as the morning, carries with it an appearance of the greatest inconsistency. There are very few of our descriptive poets who have not given us some of the most pleasing proofs of the excellence of their compositions, in their pictures of morning scenery : indeed this season possesses something that is really and peculiarly poetical. The beauties of the unfolding landscape, and the song of cheerfulness which echoes through the woods, are themes adapted for the exercise of the powers of the finest genius, and produce, without any effort of thought, a train of pleasing ideas, harmonious in themselves, and easily infused into the language which is necessary to express them. The morning affords

subjects for contemplation also which are exclusively her own. The rising sun is the majestic herald who announces her advance, and the glittering dew-drops are the gems which deck her vesture. The "lyric lark" ascends to hymn her praise, whilst a thousand warblers conspire to swell the chorus of the anthem. The sons of labour greet her approach with pleasure, and the glow of health, which animates their countenances, serves as her silent panegyrist; whilst all that strength and vigour of body can bestow, and cheerfulness of mind can impart, add their willing tribute to her genial influence.

Before I conclude this letter I will recal to your remembrance (as I do not suppose that any of them are new to you) some of our poets' descriptions of the beauties of morning. The rising sun has ever been a favourite theme with them, and they have done ample justice to the dignity and majesty of the object described.

But yonder comes the powerful king of day,
Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
Illum'd with fluid gold, his near approach
Betoken glad. Lo ; now, apparent all,
Aslant the dew-bright earth, and coloured air,
He looks in boundless majesty abroad,
And sheds the shining day, that burnish'd plays,
On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering streams,
High gleaming from afar.

THOMSON.

But see, the flush'd horizon flames intense
With vivid red, in rich profusion streamed
O'er heaven's pure arch. At once the clouds assume
Their gayest liveries ; these with silvery beams
Fringed lovely ; splendid those in liquid gold :
And speak their sov'reign's state. He comes, behold :
Fountain of light and colour, warmth and life !
The king of glory ! round his head divine,
Diffusive showers of radiance circling flow,
As o'er the Indian wave uprising fair
He looks abroad on Nature, and invests,
Where'er his universal eye surveys,
Her ample bosom, earth, air, sea, and sky,
In one bright robe, with heavenly tinctures gay.

MALLET.

Dew is such a beautiful object, that the poets have introduced it into some of their most interesting descriptions of morn-

ing, with a very happy effect : and Job, in his sublime description of the majesty of the Creator, has referred to the peculiar importance of this prolific source of fertility, when he represents the Lord as answering out of the whirlwind, and inquiring “ who hath begotten the drops of the dew ? ” *

Milton has several striking allusions to the dews.

Now morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl.

An anonymous poet has alluded to them with a peculiar felicity in the following passage.

With starry splendour on the hawthorn bough,
And graceful wild-rose, shines the copious dew,
That precious lymph of nature, which dilates
The ruby lip of every infant bud,
And lavish on the level turf remains
In silver beauty.

Milton has introduced this into two similes, equally apt, and equally pleasing.

* Job, xxxviii. 28.

In describing the number of the host of Satan :—

An host,
Innumerable as the stars of night,
Or *stars of morning*, dew-drops, which the sun,
Impearls on every leaf and every flower.

The silence of Dalilah on visiting her sightless husband, is thus expressed.

Yet on she moves, now stands, and eyes thee fixed,
About t' have spoke ; but now, with head declined,
Like a fair flower surcharg'd *with dew*, she weeps,
And words address'd seem into tears dissolved,
Wetting the borders of her silken veil.

Thomson's description of the gradual advance of morning possesses all the characteristic beauties of that interesting poet.

And now observant of approaching day,
The meek-ey'd morn appears, mother of dews,
At first faint gleaming in the dappled east :
Till far o'er ether spreads the widening glow ;
And, from before the lustre of her face,
White break the clouds away. With quickened step,
Brown night retires : young day pours in apace,
And opens all the lawny prospect wide.
The dripping rock, the mountain's misty top
Swell on the sight, and brighten with the dawn.

Blue, through the dusk, the smoking currents shine ;
And from the bladed field the fearful hare
Limps, awkward ; while along the forest-glade
The wild deer trip, and often turning gaze
At early passenger. Music awakes
The native voice of undissembled joy :
And thick around the woodland, hymns arise.

THOMSON.

I must not omit Beattie's "melodies of morn ;" and though the third stanza is not exactly in the situation in which the elegant writer of the Minstrel has placed it, yet it concludes with so powerful an appeal, and unanswerable a question, that I do not know a better place for it.

But who the melodies of morn can tell?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side ;
The lowing herd ; the sheepfold's simple bell ;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley ; echoing far and wide
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above ;
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide ;
The hum of bees, and linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

The cottage curs at early pilgrim bark ;
Crown'd with her pail the tripping milk-maid sings ;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield ; and hark !
Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings ;

Through rustling corn the hare astonish'd springs;
Slow tolls the village clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequester'd bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aërial tour.

Oh! how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which nature to her votary yields?
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven,
Oh! how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven?

Nor have our poets confined their descriptions to a mere relation of the beauties of morning scenery; they have endeavoured to persuade their readers to experience them, and have expostulated with them on the criminal indulgence, which, from the loss of real pleasure that it occasions, might, perhaps, be more properly styled, however paradoxical it may sound, criminal self-denial.

Falsely luxurious, will not man awake;
And, springing from the bed of sloth, enjoy

The cool, the fragrant, and the silent hour,
 To meditation due, and sacred song?
 For is there aught in sleep can charm the wise?
 To lie in dead oblivion, losing half
 The fleeting moments of too short a life;
 Total extinction of th' enlighten'd soul!
 Or else to feverish vanity alive,
 Wildered, and tossing through distemper'd dreams.
 Who would in such a gloomy state remain
 Longer than nature craves; when every muse
 And every blooming pleasure wait without,
 To bless the wildly devious morning walk?

THOMSON'S SUMMER.

Do you recollect these lines of Her-
 rick's? If some parts are rather homely,
 you must attribute it to the debasing nature
 of the conduct he is reprobating.

Get up: get up, for shame! the blooming morn
 Upon her wings presents the god unshorn;
 See how Aurora throws her fair
 Fresh quilted colours through the air.
 Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
 The dew-bespangling herb and tree,
 Each flow'r has wept, and bow'd toward the east,
 Above an hour since, and yet you are not drest,
 Nay, not so much as out of bed,
 When all the birds have matins said
 And sung their thankful hymns—'tis sin,
 Nay, profanation to keep in!—

But I will conclude these quotations with one piece of advice, and I can only say—do follow it.

“ Rise before the sun,
Then make a breakfast of the morning dew,
Served up by nature on some grassy hill,
You'll find it nectar.”

Yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

To the same.

MY DEAR CHARLOTTE,

IN writing to you upon the beauties of those scenes which the morning presents, and in endeavouring to render that "sweet hour of prime" a part of the day in which you shall feel the greatest interest, and experience the highest satisfaction; it serves as a great addition to the pleasure which I should have otherwise felt, that I am not obliged to stop at the point which I have already reached, lest, if I went beyond it, you would no longer be able to sympathize in my feelings, or be willing to coincide with my sentiments. Nature at all times affords a pleasing subject for description, and, connected with those delicate susceptibilities of mind which it frequently excites, it cannot fail to produce a very peculiar interest in the man who is pos-

sessed of a refined taste, and whose habits have been favourable for literary acquirements. But if we can go no further than this, though we may arrogate to ourselves the title of philosophers, we shall have no claim to the nobler and more distinguished appellation of Christians. There are very few who do not feel some peculiar sensations of pleasure whilst contemplating the beauties of nature in the morning. The whole of its scenery is calculated to inspire them, and the exhilarated state of the spirits, and the liveliness both of the mental and corporeal faculties, produce that self-complacency and internal satisfaction, which would render inferior charms, and less powerful attractions, capable of exciting admiration and securing regard. The dawning of day, and the gradual dissipation of the clouds; the rising of the sun, and the reflection of his beams upon the summits of the hills; the spangled dew, and the harmony of the feathered choir, regale the senses, and invite the beholder to join with all around him in hailing the

return of another day. But the Christian finds in these objects a source of pleasure and of joy, which a stranger to his feelings cannot experience. He beholds the power and the goodness of his "Father who is in heaven," displayed in all his footsteps upon the earth ;

He sees with other eyes than theirs: where they

Discern a sun, he spies a Deity :

What makes another *smile*, makes him *adore*.

YOUNG.

It is not till we have discovered the munificence and the greatness of the Deity exemplified in the noblest of all his works, the work of redemption, and have been enabled by faith in the Son of God to feel a personal and individual interest in that wonderful display of his compassion, that we can derive from the less magnificent wonders of creation the purest pleasures, and the highest gratifications which they are capable of affording. The principle which converting grace infuses into the mind, runs through every thought, and gives a new current to the feelings and the passions. The real

Christian, who is living up to the exalted privileges which he is permitted to enjoy, and leading a life of consistency with his Master's will, finds a fresh source of love, and a new spring of gratitude in every thing that surrounds him. Possessed of that spirituality of mind which is "life and peace," he no longer looks upon the extended prospects which expand before him, and the numerous minuter beauties which present themselves on every side, with the eye of curiosity, or mere sensitive pleasure; he no longer praises the landscape, while he forgets "its Author;" but he discerns the great and eternal Maker of all worlds in every object that claims and obtains his admiration; he sees

"The unambiguous footsteps of the god,
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds."

And remember, my dear Charlotte, that of all the portions of the day, the morning is the best adapted to excite those peculiar feelings, and to call into exercise those

emotions, which characterize the Christian's contemplation of the beauties of nature. Permit me to remind you of the train of ideas to which it may lead, and a few of the peculiar reflections which it is calculated to suggest.

View the sun, the glorious orb of day, rising in all his splendour, and rejoicing like "the strong man" "to run" his daily and appointed "race." See how the shades of midnight have fled at his approach, and the clouds that hovered over the eastern horizon have vanished before his power. And will not this noblest object of the visible creation remind you of "the Chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely?" Of "the Sun of Righteousness," who, to them who "fear the name" of the Lord, shall "arise with healing on his wings?"* What a beautiful and peculiarly applicable emblem of the Saviour does the sun afford. His gracious influences, shed upon the mind, have scattered the mists of ignorance which so long had veiled it; have exhibited the native defor-

* Mal. iv. 2.

mity of sin, and the beauty of holiness ; have unfolded the perfections of Deity, and illumined the road that leads to their enjoyment ; have dispersed the clouds that seemed to invest a just and righteous God with frowns, and array him with all the awe of inaccessible majesty and inflexible justice, and have declared “ that he is love.” His revelation, whereby “ through the tender mercy of our God, the *day-spring* from on high hath visited us ; to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death : to guide our feet into the way of peace—” * his revelation permits us to contemplate, with the eye of faith, the noon-day “ brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person ” † “ in the face of his anointed ; ” it points out to us the path that leads to happiness and heaven :—which, whilst it shews the world to be a wilderness, and its promised pleasures thorns, guides and directs the wearied traveller to his home ; and as the light of the reconciled countenance of their God is lifted upon his people, it dispels their

* Luke, i. 78, 79.

† Heb. i. 3.

doubts, and animates their hopes; brightens their prospects, and invigorates their strength; cheers their hearts, and consoles their minds; reveals the riches of his fulness, and the bounties of his grace; the faithfulness of his promises, and the immutability of his word; the strength of his arm, and his willingness to exert it; the exhaustless treasures of his wisdom, and the boundless extent of his love.

But the beauty of morning is very much increased by the drops of dew which are hanging from every blade of grass, and are reflecting the rays of the sun in a thousand different directions. Not a sound has been heard nor a leaf been moved, whilst the secret operation has been advancing: and what a pleasing emblem does this afford of the influences of the Holy Spirit. How mild, how gentle, how imperceptible have its effusions often been upon our minds! What a train of heavenly thoughts has it inspired, whilst we have scarcely known how to account for their existence: what an unruffled calm has it produced, and how has it spoken peace to the troubled con-

science, when a thousand worldly cares and anxieties were raising a tumult in our breasts. But these gems which thus adorn the smiling landscape, are not merely designed to add to the transient loveliness of the scene; they tend to perpetuate its beauty by deepening the verdure of the fields, and heightening the blooming tints, and increasing the fragrant odours of the flowers on which they hang. And may we not trace a similarity between these effects, and the sanctifying influences of the spirit of truth? Are they not instrumental in refreshing and invigorating all the graces of the Christian character? in maturing the fruits of holiness? Do they not so impress upon our minds, and enforce upon our consciences, the great and important truths of the Bible, that they are made so intrinsically a part of our moral and intellectual constitutions, as to prove by the effects which they produce in our lives and conduct, that they are become essential and vital principles? Do they not prevent the doctrines we have embraced, and the creed we have professed, from losing their ef-

ficacy for want of a motive for action, or a stimulus to exertion? And amidst all the different shades of character, and the diversity of talent with which we are surrounded, do they not influence each according to his particular requirements, and whilst the means are the same, produce effects equally pleasing and beneficial by reason of their variety?

But will my dear Charlotte here suggest the painful doubt which has so often disturbed her peace? Will she heave the distrustful sigh, and tell me *now*, as she has sometimes done before, that reflections such as these may occupy the mind and animate the hopes of the real disciple of the Son of God; but that she has no claim to this high character, that she cannot feel this individual relationship, that she knows nothing of that filial appropriation which exclaims in the "spirit of adoption," "Abba, Father?" Will she tell me that she has never yet discovered the evidence of her faith, has never yet been able to recur to the time when the effectual operations

of the Holy Spirit have descended upon her soul, whilst “the dew of her birth” was “of the womb of the morning?” Permit me, my dear girl,—in whose happiness I feel no common interest, and for the increase of whose peace of mind I would offer up my unceasing prayers,—permit me to make one more allusion to the spiritual application of the lovely scenery of morning. Darkness has long maintained its empire, and thrown a veil of obscurity over the undistinguishable beauties of creation, but day-break is at hand. The grey and dusky tints which mark the eastern boundary of vision, foretel some important change; a lighter streak succeeds, and the twilight advances, but still the night appears unwilling to resign her dominion. A blush of deeper hue has suffused itself over the sky; the clouds are breaking rapidly away; and the western hills are tipped with a lustre that proclaims the approach of the great luminary of day. His effects are visible before his glories are revealed; till at length he darts his beams across the valley and the plain, and a thou-

sand voices welcome his appearance. The admiring spectator, who had groped in the obscurity, and shivered in the cold of night, though he may not have been able to mark the gradual steps by which light and warmth have advanced, yet he can recur to his distress, and say it was night; he can rejoice in the change, and say it is day. And cannot you, my dear Charlotte, recur to the hour of nature's darkness? Cannot you recollect a time when you neither saw, nor wished to see "the Sun of Righteousness?" And cannot you also remember when you longed for the "day-spring from on high?" when you rejoiced in its cheering influence? And do you not now desire the blessings and the joys which light alone can afford? Though the morning may have been overcast with clouds, have you never seen the source of your spiritual life breaking through them with some cheering rays, which have convinced you that "to them that believe he is precious?" Seek not, my dear girl, either for your evidences or your happiness

in past convictions. Does the man who walks in the light of day, ever pause lest he should have been mistaken, or ask if the sun be really risen? Does he seek for further proof than the demonstrations around him; the splendours that illumine, the heat that warms, the influence that cheers? Perhaps he cannot fix his eye with the eagle's gaze upon the glowing orb, but the weakness of his vision does not shake the firmness of his convictions. Ask yourself, my dear girl, these questions. Do I *now* feel myself lost, without a redeeming Saviour? Am I convinced that the malady of sin is incurable without a physician of value? Have I fled, and do I daily flee for refuge, to lay hold on the hope which is set before me in the Gospel? Is Christ all in all? Am I fixing my trust upon one who is "mighty to save?" Press forward in the divine life; let every doubt add earnestness to the prayer, "Lord, help my unbelief:" run the race which is set before you in the Gospel: and may your path, "the path of

the just," be like that of the sun, which not only beautifies with his beams the hours of morning, but "shines more and more unto the perfect day."

Yours, with sincere affection.

LETTER X.

To Mr. Charles G.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

THIS scrawl from one who sincerely loves you, and feels a very lively interest in your welfare, will, I suppose, find you surrounded with your volumes of legal lore ; the quaint but pithy Coke ; the profound Lyttelton ; or the elegant Blackstone : and though its perusal may a little interrupt the train of thought which your more important studies may have induced, yet, if I am not very much mistaken in the opinion I have formed of my young friend, he will be willing to indulge in a few minutes relaxation, and after the fatigues of an assiduous attention to his profession, cheerfully refresh his mind with the communications of his friend, and readily recline on the language of affection as the pillow of his repose.

Though many circumstances have conspired to prevent my earlier assurance of the continuance of my regard for you, and

have compelled me to postpone a compliance with your request that I would occasionally transmit to you such observations, and give you such advice, as my more advanced years and greater experience ought to afford me ; yet the delay in the fulfilment of my promise is to be attributed to any thing rather than to the want of a sufficient interest, either in the employment itself, or in the welfare of him for whose benefit it is designed. If I ever feel a more than ordinary degree of pleasure in any occupation that engages my attention, it is when I am exerting myself for the advantage of the young, the ardour of whose passions has not yet been cooled, and the exercise of whose reason has not yet been confirmed by the experience of age. But to you, my dear son, (for paternal solicitude may warrant the language of adoption, (I feel myself united by a firmer tie, and more lasting bond, than the mere interest which youth can excite in the bosom of age. We are, I trust, fellow sojourners in the same wilderness, fellow travellers in the same heavenly road, fellow-seekers of the same home,

citizens of one commonwealth, and members of one household. The toils that we endure are similar, the rest that we seek is the same. And did I need an inducement to stimulate me in an employment which is always grateful, the apostolic injunction, "to bear one another's burdens," would convince me that it was my duty, where my power would enable me, at least to point out the way by which another's burden could be removed, or the pressure of its weight alleviated.

You have often expressed your regret to me, that so large a portion of time in the earlier period of your life, should have been suffered to elapse, without applying your mind, and directing your studies to those subjects which would have tended to your ultimate benefit. You have often recurred to periods in your life, the recollection of whose misimprovement, has caused an expression of dissatisfaction; and have mourned over the deficiency of your advancement, which you have considered so little adequate to the advantages you have enjoyed; and this feeling, operating upon your mind,

has not wasted itself in unavailing remorse, serving only to cast a shade of melancholy over every surrounding object, and to invest with a dark and sombre hue every occupation which might gradually have removed its cause. But it has had a much more salutary effect. You have proved your repentance for the neglect of past opportunities to be sincere, by embracing the present with greater assiduity and redoubled diligence. Indeed, my cautions here must be directed against the opposite extreme. Arrived at an age when you are peculiarly sensible of the value of knowledge; when the discipline of the school or the college no longer gives the appearance of a laborious task, to what you now feel to be an agreeable duty; when the sterner characteristics of manhood add a new impulse to your energies, and render them more effectual by making them more permanent; when the daily accession of information only serves as a new stimulus to incite to further acquisitions; and when your future prospects in life begin to expand before you, and lead you to see the practical application and

actual value of every new discovery that is made, and of every page that is perused ;—under such circumstances, and influenced by such principles as these, you need no additional motives to animate your zeal, no new excitements to increase your thirst for knowledge. Indeed, I *fear* that those hours which *ought* to have been devoted to sleep, are often spent in the studious research which might enrich your mind and reward your toil if made by day, but which tends to undermine both your corporeal and mental powers, to debilitate both your intellectual and bodily vigour, when pursued by night. And I *know* that those hours which *ought not* to have been devoted to sleep, have been surrendered to it, to compensate for the nocturnal inroads which your lucubrations had been making.

If there were any one piece of advice which I would more frequently repeat than another ; if there were any one caution which I would endeavour to impress upon you with all the earnestness that sincerity of affection and personal experience could dictate ; if there were any one warning

which I would accompany with more than ordinary entreaty, and urge with more than my accustomed seriousness, it would be—avoid night studies. It is to this, in a very great measure, that we are to attribute that long and lamentable train of maladies to which the student is subject. A young man who has received the advantages of a liberal and classical education; who is ardent in the pursuit of knowledge; who feels some of his most pleasing mental associations to be connected with his literary employments; whose vanity has been cherished by the seducing praises of injudicious friends; who is the subject of those peculiar susceptibilities which accompany the first developement of genius; and whose intellectual attainments have induced a degree of conscious superiority, which nothing but the humbling doctrines of Christianity can subdue; such a young man is, of all others, the most sensible of those distressing emotions which wounded pride occasions, and is exposed to a thousand snares and temptations which others escape. And nothing tends to increase this mental irascibility,

this nervous irritation, so much as an enfeebled constitution. The connection between body and mind is so intimate, and their sympathy so great, that many a responsive melancholy note thrills through the latter, which was first struck upon some disordered chord of the former. Whatever you do, my dear Charles, trifle not with your health, as you know not how it may eventually affect your intellectual powers. You may think the caution unnecessary, but I could refer you to a period in my own experience, I could describe to you a state of mental agony, bordering on that awful condition,

“Which, of all maladies that men infest,

Claims most compassion, and obtains the least ;”

and I do not hesitate to attribute it, very considerably, if not principally, to a state of physical derangement proceeding from too severe an application to books, and still more immediately resulting from night studies. But I will not describe my own feelings in order to alarm you. I will only remind you of one, over whose sorrows we have together wept, and whose memory

has been enshrined in both our hearts; whose tender frame could ill endure the blasts of opposition to which it was exposed, and whose delicate mind shrunk from the cruel scrutiny which wantonly trifled with the fruit of its attainments; whose imagination soared in its ideal flights into regions where there was no critic to lash, no censor to condemn; but whose reason could not sustain the assaults, and whose courage could not grapple with the conflicts to which we are daily exposed in the path of real life and actual experience; who seemed too tender and too delicate a plant for earth, and was soon removed to a more congenial soil, and a more propitious climate. The very mention of the name of Henry Kirke White, whilst it includes all that is amiable in disposition, delicate in sentiment, elegant in taste, and exalted in genius, should serve as a friendly monitor to those who are seeking honours in a similar track; and should whisper the caution, to avoid the dangerous course which ruined his health, and shook the nobler fabric of his mind.

Will you urge in reply, that to the man who has time to expatiate over the whole extent of general literature, who is a mere virtuoso in intellectual pursuits, who can exchange the reasonings of philosophy for the more attractive fascinations of poetry or of fiction, who can quit the minute researches of judgment for the extended flights and airy visions of imagination, without acting inconsistently with his duty, or interfering with necessary and indispensable engagements,—that to such a man my advice might be applicable; but, that to one whose daily avocations require the practical application of his nocturnal acquisitions of knowledge, and whose active life leaves no leisure hour in which to provide for the emergencies of the next, the recommendation to relinquish the opportunities which night affords of advancing his professional attainments, would be to surrender all hopes of present credit or of future eminence? Let me ask you, have you never thought that the same portion of time in the *morning*, *before* the business of the day has commenced, is at least equally valu-

able as that at *night, after* the body has been exhausted by fatigue, and the mind wearied by exertion? Has it never occurred to you, that there are many peculiar advantages attached to such an employment of the early part of the day, arising from its adaptation to mental pursuits, and its invigorating effects upon the corporeal powers? If you have never reflected on this, let me intreat you to give it the consideration which it demands; and if you have sometimes speculated upon its probable correctness, let me persuade you to experience its practical truth.

I am well aware of the delusive view which a young man is apt to take of this subject. He has been accustomed to associate in his mind the idea of great advancement in knowledge, or superior eminence in his professional application, with that of midnight study. The very terms which are often employed to designate those works which he has regarded as the labours of men of the highest attainments and greatest abilities, have served to confirm this impression. He has read of the "*Annorum*

· viginti *Lucubrationes*" of the lawyer; the erudite productions and finished compositions of a celebrated author have been characterized as "*smelling of the lamp*;" and the works to which he has attached the confidence of authority, and on which he has looked as the standards of correctness, have been pronounced to bear the marks of midnight research; and whilst he has been desirous both to derive the information which they convey, and to emulate the assiduity and possess the knowledge of their authors, he considers that the only method is to follow their example, and to tread in their steps. But let me ask you, my dear Charles, if this is not, after all, a mere deception? Have we not had repeated instances of men of the greatest learning and most solid acquirements, who are indebted for them to the *morning* rather than to the *night*? And does not this season afford epithets much more in unison with your feelings, and more grateful to your mind, than the shades of darkness? Will you believe the feeble glimmerings of the lamp, whose light is conveyed in fitful flashes, to

be so influential upon the thinking faculties, so auxiliary to the intellectual powers, as the pure, unwavering blaze of the orb of day? Would you rather your compositions should be scented with the odours of its oil, than breathe the freshness, and impart the fragrance of the morn? Would you prefer the intended compliment of a companion to the owl, to the more pleasing comparison with the lark? However *you* may feel about the matter, my dear fellow, let me tell you that you shall have the blinkings and the blindness, the screechings and the squallings of the former; if *I* can enjoy the liveliness and the loftiness, the melody and the music of the latter.

But let me assure you, my dear Charles, that I am much more inclined to be serious than jocose, and that I feel so strongly the importance of what I have been writing, that I shall not be satisfied till I have reason to believe that you have been convinced of its propriety, and have acted up to your convictions. Even supposing for a moment (though it is what I can never allow,) that there is not that power of close application

to study in the morning that the evening affords, yet you cannot deny the different effects which they are calculated to produce upon the health, and eventually upon the mental faculties. And is the advancement in intellectual improvement of such exclusive importance? is the cultivation of the mind of such paramount consequence? Remember, my dear Charles, that a progressive knowledge of divine things, a growth in grace, an increasingly useful employment of talents, and a more correct standard of moral excellence, should be the supreme objects of your regard. If you were wholly to devote your time to literary pursuits; if you could acquire all that assiduity could bestow or perseverance effect; if you could ascend the highest eminence which genius had ever reached, and command a greater extent of view than the most exalted mind has yet enjoyed; if you could cast your eye over the spacious field which expanded beneath you, and behold from your "speculative height" a prospect that was only bounded by the inequality of your vision; you would be led to confess

that your pre-eminence afforded no rational ground for self-importance ; or, if you were too proud to make such an avowal, we should soon be convinced of its truth. But the Scriptures hold out to you a nobler object of acquisition, an object worthy of your most earnest endeavours, and calculated to reward your most diligent exertions. There are summits of greater elevation, sublimer heights which afford more extensive views. The perfection which the Christian is exhorted to attain, will present a constant object for your emulation ; and whilst there is no promise contained in the word of truth to cheer us in our mental pursuits or intellectual labours, when confined to the narrow limits of our present existence, there is every thing to animate our zeal and invigorate our strength in our progress in the divine life ; and, at the same time, the Holy Spirit is promised to those who ask it, by Him through whom it flows, on whom it was bestowed without measure, and in whom “ all fulness dwells.”

Yours, very affectionately.

LETTER XI.

To the same.

AND do you still, my dear Charles, really fear that if you follow my advice, and devote the early hours of morning to study, that you shall not gain any thing in point of intellectual advantage; or rather, that you shall not be so well able to attend to your professional researches then, as at night? Let me only beg your candid attention to a few of the arguments which may with propriety be urged on my side of the question, reminding you at the same time, if you should be inclined to consider my opinions as merely speculative, that I might not only adduce my own actual experience, but that I could refer you to a long and luminous train of literati, whose example should inspire your emulation, and whose learning should remove every doubt from your mind.

You cannot hesitate to admit what I have before alluded to—the intimate connexion that exists between the body and the mind, and how much the strength and energies of the latter depend upon the vigour and health of the former. Their union is so strict, that they alternately impede or assist, excite or depress, stimulate or assuage each other. And when, is it natural to suppose, that the body is the most likely to afford that co-operation with the mind which it requires? Will it not be when its members are the least discomposed by fatigue; when its power has been the least weakened by exertion; when the strength has been augmented by the refreshment of rest, and when its functions are discharged with the greatest ease, and the least perceptible constraint? And is not this precisely the case in the early part of the morning? It is then that the corporeal faculties seem ready to obey the intellectual; that mind exerts a sovereignty, and maintains a superiority that is peculiarly favourable for the promotion of its operations; and that every nerve and muscle

combine to give an elasticity to thought, and a sprightliness to genius, which no other portion of the day affords.

Another advantage, and I am inclined to consider it a very important one, is, the cheerfulness of disposition which is generally experienced in the morning. The temper has not yet been ruffled by the opposition that the business of the day occasions ; the inclination has not been thwarted by the obstinacy or the ignorance of those who ought to have complied with it ; the will has not been denied what it was anxious to obtain : but the pleasure resulting from the conquest of self, and sensual indulgence, produces a complacency of feeling, which invests every object in the most agreeable colours, and lessens the difficulties which would at any other period have assumed a formidable aspect. I need not impress upon you the importance of this state of mind, and its absolute necessity if we wish to study to real advantage and lasting benefit. There is not a greater enemy to literary pursuits than discontent. It draws a deceitful veil before our fairest pros-

pects ; it insinuates that our present employments will not promote our future interests, but that some other occupation would better advance them, and that a different course of study would lead us by a shorter and more flowery road to the object of our ambition. It depresses the animal spirits, weakens the very springs of action, undermines the whole fabric we had endeavoured to erect, annihilates hope, and sweeps away the resolutions which it had cost us months to mature, and deprives us of the benefits of their adoption, just as we were beginning to put them into execution.

Perhaps, however, I cannot urge a stronger or a more available argument in support of my position, than the well-attested fact, of the extraordinary power which memory exerts in the morning. You can recollect the time when your school-boy task was read the last thing at night, and was perfectly learnt by one or two repetitions in the morning. And you have, no doubt, in later periods, often endeavoured at night, with earnest but fruitless care, to recollect

some particular authority, to recal some apposite case, or to strengthen your own opinion by the dictum of some learned lawyer, which you have formerly met with; but you have been obliged to relinquish your object, completely foiled and disappointed: when on the succeeding morning, without a mental effort, the wished-for passage, or the name of the desired author has suddenly flashed across your mind, and afforded you the assistance you required. Many persons have mentioned to me similar instances of the strength of their memories in the morning, alluding to them merely as curious facts, without either resolving to derive any advantage from the habitual use of so favourable a period, or endeavouring to explain a phenomenon, the existence of which they were ready to acknowledge. You may, perhaps, be better able to do the latter than myself; but whether you succeed in this or not, you have it in your power to enjoy all the benefits which can result from the former. Surely that time is the most favourable for study, in which recollection exerts its full and uninterrupted force. Nor

is it merely instrumental in recalling at pleasure past acquisitions of knowledge ; it impresses upon the understanding, and infixes in the memory, the facts and the truths which you are then attending to ; and adds to that store of information from which you are to draw your future supplies, and to which you are to look as the source of your future attainments.

It is a possible case, that you may have made the experiment of morning study, and after a first or second trial have relinquished it. The difficulty which you have experienced in breaking off your accustomed habit of lying in bed, has probably dispirited you ; and the loss of time which has been occasioned by surrendering the evening in order to gain the morning, and after all, losing the morning through the want of sufficient resolution to overcome your usual indulgence, has induced you to resolve to secure those hours which were within your power, and not to abandon the present certainty for the morrow's probability. But, I must beg of you to remember, that however plainly this may prove your irresolu-

tion, and however great a reflection it may cast on your courage and decision, it does not in any way invalidate my arguments; nor can I suffer any thing that you can urge of a speculative nature to alter my opinion so long as I can refer to my own experience, and to that of those celebrated authors, who, if living, could not only employ a power of persuasion and a force of reasoning on this subject, superior to any thing I can hope to possess, but who, though dead, still speak in the mementoes of their greatness which they have left for posterity; evincing at once the value of that time which they devoted to their composition, the admirable manner in which it was employed, and its peculiar suitableness for the profitable employments to which it was applied.

Has the recollection of some learned writer, some erudite scholar, or some profound lawyer, to whom you have been accustomed to look with reverence, and who was indebted for his proficiency to the quiet hours of night, seduced you into the adoption of his practice, and led you to follow

his example? But do you remember, that though he has left for your improvement the result of his diligence, he has not communicated to you the anxiety of mind and the debility of body which it produced? That though you can trace the workings of his cultivated and well-stored intellect, and reap the benefits of its arduous labours, you cannot mark the nervous irritability that agitated his frame, and the melancholy forebodings which sometimes clouded his desponding imagination? That though you can still contemplate with rapture the bright coruscations of eloquence that flashed from his pen, you cannot now behold with pity the languor of his faded eye? That though you can admire the perseverance which seemed to bring within the compass of one short life, what appeared to require the extended duration of centuries; and though you may long to emulate the strength of intellect which could retain within its grasp the mighty mass of information which ages might have been well employed in accumulating; your sympathy cannot now be excited for the sacrifice of health which

had been offered, the surrender of less attractive but more endearing qualities which had been made, and the dark and dismal cloud which the studies of night had often thrown before his future prospects, leading him to doubt the correctness of the very principles in which you are now confiding, and to question the value of the sentiments which have become the standard of your judgment, and the ground of your reliance? Could you but disencumber your imagination of all the pleasing accompaniments with which you have invested your favourite author, and instead of viewing him as crowned with the chaplet of literary fame, could you dwell upon the pallid cheek which glowed not at the dear bought honour, and mark the sunken eye which glistened not at the bestowment of the meed, the attainment of which had robbed it of its fire; instead of desiring to pursue a similar track to obtain the same reward, you would be almost tempted to exclaim,

“ Oh! Health, is Thought thy foe? Adieu
Ye midnight lamps, ye curious tomes,
Mine eye o’er hills and vallies roams,
And deals no more with you.” SHENSTONE.

And will you not, my dear Charles, rather follow the example of those who have made as great a proficiency in their several departments of learning as your highest ambition could hope, or your most sanguine wishes could desire to attain, but who, at the same time, have made the least possible sacrifice of health? or do you fear that there are no such examples? Let me just remind you of a few, out of the numbers that I could mention.

Bishop Burnet, the author of "The History of his own Times," was an habitual early riser. Whilst he was at college, his father used to arouse him to his studies every morning at four o'clock, and he continued the practice during the remainder of his life. It is to this habit that we are indebted to Dr. Doddridge for nearly the whole of his valuable works, who, notwithstanding his various labours, both as a minister and a tutor, has left us many proofs of his talents as an author*. Bishop Jewell

* Doddridge's Family Expositor. Note to Remarks. Rom. c. xiii. v. 13.

regularly rose to study at four. Sir Thomas More usually rose at the same early hour, and yet he remarks in his preface to the *Utopia*, that he had completed that work by stealing time from his *sleep* and his meals; and he appeared to be so well satisfied of the excellence of the habit, that he represents the *Utopians* as attending public lectures every morning before day-break.

Dr. Parkhurst, the philologist rose regularly at five in summer and winter, and in the latter season made his own fire. It is recorded of John, Lord Hervey, that "in those early hours when all around were hushed in sleep, he seized the opportunity of that quiet as the most favourable season for study, and frequently spent an useful day before others began to enjoy it.*

Do you not remember Paley's account of the early part of his college life? "I spent," said he, when conversing with some of his friends, "I spent the first two years of my under-graduateship happily, but un-

* Middleton's dedication to the *Life of Cicero*.

profitably. I was constantly in society, where we were not immoral, but idle and rather expensive. At the commencement of my third year, however, after having left the usual party at rather a late hour in the evening, I was awakened at five in the morning by one of my companions, who stood at my bed-side, and said,—‘Paley, I have been thinking what a fool you are. I could do nothing probably, if I were to try, and can afford the life I lead: you could do every thing, and cannot afford it. I have had no sleep during the whole night on account of these reflections, and am now come solemnly to inform you, that if you persist in your indolence, I must renounce your society.’ I was so struck,” Dr. Paley continued, “with the visit and the visiter, that I lay in bed great part of the day, and formed my plan. I ordered my bed-maker to lay my fire every evening, in order that it might be lighted by myself. *I arose at five*, read during the whole of the day, except such hours as chapel and hall required, allotting to each portion of

time its peculiar branch of study : and just before the closing of gates (nine o'clock) I went to a neighbouring coffee-house, where I constantly regaled upon a mutton chop and a dose of milk punch, and then on taking my bachelor's degree, I became senior wrangler."*

I might refer you to the opinions and practice of the famous Franklin, and Priestley, and many others; but you will, perhaps, prefer an example taken from one in your own profession. Sir Matthew Hale, that great and learned lawyer, and pious christian, whilst at Lincoln's Inn preparing himself for the bar, studied sixteen hours in the day, rising very early every morning.

Do you need classical authorities? You remember our old friend Horace's "*gnavus mane forum*," and "*sub galli cantum consultor ubi ostia pulsat*;"† and Homer has told us,

" Ουχρη πανυχιον ευδειν Βεληφορον Ανδρα."

* Meadley's Memoirs of Dr. Paley, p. 194, 5. † Hor. Sat. l. 1. Sat. 1. l. 10.

And your master, Sir Edward Coke, has quoted with approbation, and recommended to his readers, the following lines from some ancient poet;

Sex horas somno, totidem des legibus æquis,
Quatuor orabis, des Epulisque duas,
Quod superest—ultrò sacris largire Camænis.*

Whilst you are anxious, my dear Charles, to rise to the summit of your profession, and are emulous of the talents of those great and learned men who have preceded you, may you pursue your studies with that moderation which the dictates both of reason and scripture require. May your great concern be, to promote the glory of God in whatever you do: and may you be desirous that in proportion as your knowledge is increased, your piety may be augmented; that every fresh accession of influence may be employed for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ; and that however high your attainments, or, however extended your learning may be, you may still sit at the

* Co. Lit. l. 2. c. 1. b. 64.

feet of Jesus with the meekness of a little child, "and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord, for whom" may you be "willing to suffer the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that you may win Christ."

Yours, very sincerely.

LETTER XII.

To Mrs. G.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE been hesitating a little as to which of your family I should address this letter, as all my correspondents to whom I have been recommending the habit of early rising, have severally complained of my deficiency in one respect. They tell me that I have pointed out their error, and urged upon them respectively those reasons for a change in their conduct, which appeared to apply individually to them, but that I have not attempted to give them any directions as to the most effectual method of rendering my advice of some avail, by enabling them to put it into practice. I am resolved, therefore, to endeavour to supply the omission, and will thank you to consider yourself as being not only personally interested in the contents of this letter, but

also as the channel of communication to the rest of your family.

You complain that you were led to form resolutions, which you thought very determined, but that after two or three mornings, you returned to your old habit, and required some new stimulus to operate upon you. If you have been induced but *once* to get the better of your indisposition to rise, you have proved that the difficulty was not insuperable, and that only the continuation of the motive was wanted to produce a perseverance in the effect: and I am aware of nothing so likely to procure the desired result, as the habitual persuasion of the importance of early rising itself, and the numerous advantages which attend it. Endeavour to impress your mind every night before you go to sleep, with the indispensable necessity of rising early on the following morning. Take a cursory review of all the arguments which have been, or may be, advanced, in favour of the practice; of the happy effects which it produces; and the pernicious consequences

which result from a contrary line of conduct. Think on the value of the smallest portion of time, the regret that is occasioned by a recollection of its loss, and the satisfaction that is experienced by reflections on its improvement:—how consoling the retrospect of minutes won! how sad the remembrance of moments thrown away! Anticipate the feelings of a death-bed recurrence to the years that are past; divest yourself of the carelessness of health and security; and realize the views of one who is awakened by the pangs of dissolution and the prospects of eternity; recal the solemn fact to your mind, that time is a talent of which you must render an exact account, and determine to spend it now, as you would then wish it had been spent. Look back upon the countless hours already lost, and though you cannot redeem them, you may prove that you are not impenitent, by the economical use of those which remain; and accustom yourself to meditate on the probability of your suddenly exchanging misimproved time for an

eternity which will not be too long to lament its profusion. It is by reflections such as these that the incitement will continue, and you will soon establish such a regular custom of early rising, that the practice will eventually become habitual, without the necessity of recalling the reasons which led to it.

I am aware of the inflexibility of a deeply-rooted habit, and the difficulty that attends the effort to eradicate it: but this difficulty is greatly increased or diminished according as the means employed for its destruction are improperly or wisely selected. And I do not hesitate to say, that if you will follow my advice for one month, you will find that the slothful and pernicious habit of lying in bed longer than is sufficient to recruit the exhausted energies of the frame, may be most easily overcome. What is habit, but the repetition of single acts? The first was an involuntary error, the next derived a kind of sanction from its having a precedent, the third followed upon the authority of the former two, the fourth

appeared almost natural, and so they continued in succession till their impropriety was overlooked, and their frequency served to hide their odiousness. "Habit," says a learned writer, "like a complex mathematical scheme, flowed originally from a point, which insensibly became a line, which unfortunately became a curve, which finally became a difficulty not easily to be unravelled." But is there no way of unravelling this difficulty, though it may not be very *easily* effected? May it not be gradually *destroyed*, as it was gradually *created*? No doubt it may; and the most effectual manner of emancipating yourself from the slavish habit alluded to, will be by breaking it off as it was formed—by degrees.

You have most likely felt all the earnestness which is very frequently the result of recent convictions, and have determined to carry your resolutions into practice, anxious to derive the immediate advantage which you wished to obtain, rather than to lay a solid foundation for future perseverance. You have risen two or three hours

earlier than your accustomed time, and pleased alike with the novelty of the thing itself, the conquest you have made, and the liveliness and vivacity of spirits which the morning air has produced, you have thought that the point was gained by a single effort, and have given yourself up to all the security of victory. But you have found that you were mistaken. In a few mornings, when the first impulse had lost its original force, when the stimulus had subsided, and was succeeded by a self-complacent assurance of success, and when the diminution of your usual quantity of sleep occasioned a greater than ordinary degree of drowsiness and disinclination to rise; you relapsed at once into your old degeneracy, dispirited by your failure, and requiring some new energies to rouse you from your lethargy. I do not wonder at the result, for I have felt precisely the same myself; and if I may be permitted to allude to my own experience as a proof of the most effectual method of gaining your object, the plan I would recommend possesses that advantage. You

must conquer by degrees. Rise five minutes earlier every morning, till you have arrived at the hour which appears to you most eligible. You will thus accomplish the work which you are so anxious to effect. The daily subtraction from sleep will be so trifling that it will not occasion that drowsiness on the succeeding morning which the sudden change from rising at eight to five must necessarily produce. You will thus reach the object of your wishes in the surest and easiest manner. You will be daily undermining a very injurious habit, and confirming a very useful one. A short period will make such a sensible difference in the time you have gained, that you will begin to feel the pleasure of victory, before you are scarcely conscious of having commenced the combat. The last day in each week will be half an hour longer than the first, and at the termination of a month you will become an early riser, with the additional advantage of having formed the habit in such a manner that there is little danger of its being relinquished.

As I cannot presume to take upon myself the character of your family physician, I will not venture to attempt a definitive answer to your question, as to the quantity of sleep necessary for health. Each individual may soon judge for himself, and very few err on the side of allowing themselves too little. I do not think that nature requires more than six or seven hours sleep at the farthest; and if one quarter of your time consumed in total inaction be sufficient to recruit the corporeal and mental faculties, you will surely be anxious that no more should be sacrificed than is absolutely necessary. If you feel the proportion to be inadequate, let an hour be taken from the evening rather than the morning. Retire to rest earlier, but do not lie in bed later. Look upon the beginning of the day as sacred; resolve that nothing shall rob you of it; remember that the enjoyment of it is the reward of a conquest, the spoils of an incursion upon an enemy's territory, unjustly acquired by him, and lawfully regained by you; that they are the uninterrupted

hours upon which no unwelcome visiter intrudes, no unexpected engagement infringes, and no unlooked for employment trespasses. Shew that you know their value too well to throw them away; that you estimate their advantages at too high a rate to relinquish them. Consider the regret you have sometimes felt when you have omitted to improve them; the expense of feeling it has cost you when your resolutions were ineffectual, and the satisfaction that crowned your triumph.

But let me remind you of one thing; that the best assurance of eventual success in your endeavours to form this desirable habit, will result from the assistance of the Holy Spirit. I need not urge upon you the consideration of your own weakness: a recurrence to many parts of your past experience will best convince you of this. Nor need I point out to you those passages in the sacred Scriptures in which his influences are promised, and his assistance is proffered. You are well acquainted with them, and I will conclude by entreating you to apply

them to the present object; and whatever difficulties may appear to oppose, whatever impediments may threaten to obstruct, and whatever obstacles may seem to prevent, they shall all be completely removed and overcome; and you will experience the truth of that encouraging declaration, that through Jesus Christ strengthening us we can do all things.

I am, &c.

LETTER XIII.

To Mr. Charles G.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

WHATEVER arguments may have been employed in the letters which I have already addressed to you on the subject of early rising, they have been principally, if not entirely, drawn from considerations which may be regarded as being exclusively of a temporal nature. Not but that I am fully sensible that every advantage, which I have endeavoured to point out to you as the result of this beneficial practice, may be rendered subservient to the promotion of more important objects, and the fulfilment of higher purposes; but the motives which have been urged have been such as might with equal propriety have been insisted on, if I had been addressing myself to one who was a stranger to the great truths of the Gospel, and who did not profess to be influenced by the doctrines, or guided by the

precepts of Christianity. But you are equally sensible with myself of the comparative insignificance of every motive that is not derived from the fountain of all truth ; and of the deficiency of every result that is not connected with the advancement of the glory of God, and the promotion of our own spiritual interests. It is upon this ground that I now desire to meet you ; and whatever may have been written with regard to your health, your time, or your intellectual improvement, it will not be of so much avail as those reasons which I would urge upon you as a *Christian*, and those principles of action with which I would endeavour to supply you from the word of God. To one who believes with a firm and well-grounded faith in the doctrines, who has imbibed with his earliest convictions the spirit, and who endeavours to practise in his daily walk and conversation the commands of Christ, such an appeal will not be made in vain ; and I cannot but hope that if I succeed in convincing you that the habit which I have endeavoured to recommend forms an essential part of Christian

duty and gospel obedience; and that the contrary practice is opposed to those pure and holy precepts which the word of truth contains, and is inconsistent with the character of a disciple of Christ; I shall have succeeded in leading you to view the subject in a light in which you have never before regarded it, and that this will be followed by a corresponding practice, proving at once the sincerity of your convictions and your decision of character.

You have not now to be told that the Bible must furnish you with the grounds of your faith, and that from thence you are to draw the rules of your conduct; that it is there you must learn what you are to believe, and discover what you are to practise: and that whatever temptations the desire of self-gratification may present, whatever allurements fleshly indulgence may offer, and whatever obstacles a sensual inclination may create; however uninviting an appearance the fear of personal inconvenience may give to particular passages of sacred writ; however we may be sometimes inclined to modify the requirements

of the Gospel,¹ and whatever boundary our own accommodation would set to the extent of the divine commands; yet still the pure and unadulterated word of God is to be the rule of all our actions; nor must we endeavour to reduce Christianity to a mere speculative creed, and circumscribe its influence within the limits of a few inoperative doctrines. And though I may not be able to refer you to any one text in Scripture which may have been originally intended to forbid the prejudicial practice I have been deprecating, or to enforce the adoption of the habit I have been recommending; yet I do not hesitate to assert, that the whole spirit of the Gospel, the constant tenor of its doctrines, the invariable tendency of its precepts, and the evident result of its practical influence, all combine to stigmatise the sensual indulgence of the morning sluggard as being opposed to the will of God, and contrary to the very fundamental principles on which the whole fabric of Christianity itself is erected.

However a very large proportion of those who have professed to embrace the

Scriptures as the rule of their conduct may act, and whatever attempts they may make to evade the personal application of those parts of the word of truth which interfere with the indulgence of their besetting sins, yet the Bible still remains the same; "let God be true and every man a liar:" and whenever you are tempted for one moment to contrast your life or behaviour with that of those around you, rather than to try it by the unerring standard of divine revelation; remember that you are exhorted "not to do as do others;" that "to their own Master they must stand or fall;" and that you are to draw your principles of action simply from the word of God, being influenced by no example but in proportion as it is conformable to the pattern there exhibited, and submitting to no authority which is not supported by the solid basis of everlasting truth.

The temperance and self-denial which the Gospel enjoins upon its believers, extend much further than many are willing to allow; or, if their judgments are convinced, their conduct contradicts their convictions.

They may abstain from those grosser vices which are included in the reprehension of many of its declarations, and the commission of which an attention to external decorum, and the general notions of society, would have prevented: but they appear to be unacquainted with that purity which is required by the word of God, and which, by extending its influence to the inmost recesses of the heart, and diffusing itself into every thought and every action, evidently demonstrates the divine original from which it springs, and happily promotes a resemblance of His holy image. If you have never viewed the practice of early rising as forming a distinguishing feature in the morality of the Gospel, and as constituting an important branch of Christian duty, it may not be misemploying either your time or my own, if I endeavour to point out to you by what *particular language* the Gospel enforces this habit of temperance, as well as the *end* it has in view. And I cannot but hope and believe, that you will no longer waver in your opinions whether the admonitions of Scripture are applicable to the

indulgence which I am anxious you should overcome, or be indifferent to the exercise of that self-denial which I am equally anxious you should practise.

And what is the *end* at which the Gospel aims, in enforcing the duty of Christian temperance? The apostle Paul will best explain this:—"Every man that *striveth for the mastery* is temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."* The means are only to be considered as valuable in proportion as they are instrumental in effecting the desired object; and the great and important object which Christians should constantly keep in view, is to obtain the *mastery*, to complete the victory over their enemies—the world, and the flesh. The latter is to be constantly regarded as a most indefatigable and artful foe; and the disciple of Jesus Christ will not lay down the "weapons of his warfare" against it, till the "Captain of his salvation" has made him come off more than a con-

* 1 Cor. ix. 25.

queror, through him that hath loved him. Every thing, therefore, that is calculated to weaken his efforts, to render his former triumphs of little avail, or to interrupt the constancy and diminish the force of his present exertions, is equally opposed to his own welfare and the design of the Gospel. And let me put it to your candid judgment let me refer it to your own experience, if the habit I have been reprehending has not this manifest tendency. It is *in itself* a complete surrender to the demands of the flesh, and a relinquishment of that superiority which the mind ought ever to maintain over the body; it is a concession of the fundamental principles of Christian practice to the requirements of a base propensity, which is inconsistent with the purity, and incompatible with the holiness of evangelical doctrines and precepts. And in its immediate, as well as its more remote effects, it produces a torpid inactivity, which is directly opposite to that lively watchfulness which should characterise the follower of the Son of God. It encourages the growth of the most unholy and impure desires; it

disables us from enduring hardships as "good soldiers of Jesus Christ; it unfits the soul for the enjoyment of that calm and happy frame, in which every impetuous passion becomes tractable, and all the faculties of the body and mind are subservient to its desires and seem almost to animate its devotion: it checks the energies of that faith which disengages us from the trammels of the world, enfranchises us from the captivity of our senses, delivers us from the thralldom of our lusts, and while it exhibits to us the glories of heaven, prepares us for their possession and their enjoyment. It pampers and gratifies the body, enfeebles and enervates the mind, and throws a dark and gloomy cloud over the Christian's future prospects, which seems to lengthen the race he has to run, and to magnify its difficulties; while the contest in which he is engaged assumes a more arduous and doubtful character. It robs him of the time which might otherwise have been employed in recruiting his failing strength, in re-animating his declining energies, in putting on the armour of God, and in striving for that crown

of glory which is the goal of his course and the reward of his toil.

And call to your recollection the particular language which the Scripture employs to describe and enforce this duty of temperance. The teachers of those false and delusive systems which have been designed to gain proselytes by gratifying the lusts, rather than by reforming the lives of those who embrace them, have endeavoured to court their favour by flattering their sensual imaginations, and yielding to their corrupt inclinations; but “the faithful and the true witness” detests such a surrender to our sinful desires; he has declared the sacrifices which are to be offered, even in the mottos which are inscribed on the portals of admission to his kingdom; and whilst the hand is lifted to knock, the eye beholds in plain and legible characters, “except a man deny himself and take up his cross *daily*, he cannot be my disciple.” The temperance of the Gospel is not dwindled down, by any soft and insinuating expressions, to a mere nominal virtue; nor are the mildest terms selected:—“We through the spirit are to

mortify the deeds of the body.”* We are called upon “to *mortify* our members which are upon the earth;”† “they that are Christ’s” are said “to have *crucified* the flesh with the lusts and affections thereof.”‡ This is evidently intended to imply such a complete conquest over the body, such a radical and essential change, as shall subdue and fetter its carnal appetites, and enable the believer to say, “I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me.” And can you imagine, my dear Charles, that there are any limits to the extent of this mortification? that a line of boundary may be drawn, and that all the lusts of the flesh beyond that line may be indulged, while those within it are to be subdued? Depend upon it, the declarations of the Gospel know of no such restrictions; and if any unrighteous propensity be tolerated, or any carnal appetite cherished, be assured that insomuch as this is concerned, you are only a “hearer but not a doer of the word.”§

* Rom. viii. 13. † Col. iii. 5. ‡ Galatians, v. 24.
§ James, i. 23.

And consider, my dear friend, the great importance of self denial to a Christian; the principles which it involves, and the results to which it leads. Read with a serious and fixed attention the numerous passages which enjoin this duty.* “Self-denial of *all* kinds,” says an excellent writer, “is the very life and soul of piety, but he that hath not so much of it as to be *early at prayer*, cannot think that he has taken up his cross, and is following Christ. What conquest has he got over himself? what right hand has he cut off? what trials is he prepared for? what sacrifice is he ready to offer to God, who cannot be so cruel to himself as to rise to prayer at such a time as the drudging part of the world are content to rise to their labour?”† There can be no doubt that self-denial is an important duty, and one with which the Christian cannot dispense: and its privileges are as great as its observance is imperative. You are exhorted “to walk in

* Matt. x. 38; xvi. 24. Mark, viii. 34. Luke, ix. 23. John, xii. 25. Acts, xiv. 22. 1 Peter, iv. 12. † Law's Serious Call.

the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh ;”* and the victory over these lusts, the not fulfilling them either in word or in deed, affords the most delightful evidence that you are really “ walking in the spirit.” And will you suffer *one* of these lusts to remain triumphant? will you forego the honour of this conquest? will you relinquish the satisfaction resulting from this evidence?

I must be permitted before I conclude this already-extended letter, to draw an inference as to the impiety which a Christian is guilty of in indulging the slothful habit of lying late in bed, from the contrast which the Scriptures present between an unconverted and a converted character, and the peculiar terms by which the state of each is described. The former is represented as being sunk into an awful *lethargy*, a deep *sleep*, a moral *stupor*, that resembles death; and the great and important change which is produced by the effectual operation of the influences of the Holy Spirit is de-

* Galatians, v. 16.

scribed as *waking* from this *sleep*, and a *resurrection* from this *death*.* And will you voluntarily relapse into a state so nearly resembling that of nature's darkness, whilst Jesus Christ is proclaiming himself to be "the light of the world,"† and is declaring that "he that followeth him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life?" And will you indulge a habit which has furnished the spirit of truth with his most frequent metaphor, to convey a suitable idea of the deadly effects of sin? Oh! rather listen to the awful interrogatory, "What meanest thou, *oh, sleeper!* arise, call upon thy God;"‡ attend to the warning voice, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."§ Know "that it is high time to awake out of *sleep*, for the night is far spent, the day is at hand: cast off, therefore, the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light."||

Recollect too the representations which

* Rom. vi. 13. John, v. 24. Eph. ii. 5; v. 14. Coloss. ii. 13. 1 Peter, ii. 24. † John, viii. 12. ‡ Jonah, i. 6. § Eph. v. 14. || Rom. xiii. 11. 12.

the word of God has exhibited of the life of the Christian. It is made up of constant exertion. It is a life of vigilance and of war. It is described as *fighting, wrestling, striving*, and contending in a race. We are emphatically called "*children of the day*;" and it is this which is to distinguish us from the world which surrounds us. We are compared to watchful virgins having oil in their lamps; servants waiting for their Lord's return; and labourers in a vineyard. The scriptures abound with exhortations to watchfulness;* and our blessed Saviour repeatedly enforced this injunction by the parables which were designed for its illustration. And "for yourself," my dear Charles, remember, and "know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night;" but be "not in darkness, that that day should overtake *you* as a thief." "You are," I trust, a child "of the light, and a child of the day;" "we are," neither of us, I hope, "of the night, nor of darkness.

* Matt. xxiv. 42; xxv. 13. Mark, xiii. 33, 37. Luke, xxi. 36. Acts, xx. 31. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. 1 Thess. v. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 5. 1 Peter, iv. 7; v. 8. Rev. xvi. 15.

Therefore let us not *sleep* as do others, but let us watch and be sober. Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of truth and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us, that whether we *wake* or *sleep*, we should live together with him.* That we may be amongst those who shall wake to eternal life, after the sleep that must succeed the day of our present existence, is the ardent prayer of

Your affectionate friend.

* 1 Thess. v. 2—10.

LETTER XIV.

To the same.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

I SAID that it was probable, that there might not be any injunction contained in the word of God, which, in its original application, was designed to enforce the duty of the habit of early rising, or any passage expressly written to reprehend the contrary practice: but I am inclined to think that I was mistaken, and that you will agree with me that there are several parts of Scripture, which directly command the one, and forbid the other. A few of these when brought to your recollection, may tend to confirm the resolutions which you profess to have already formed; and I am very sanguine in hoping, that if any arguments of *mine* could produce so important a result, the imperative claims which those I shall now urge must have upon your attention, will completely effect that

change in your future habits which I have so anxiously desired.

The word of God, whilst it derives its principal value from its exhibiting the *way* of salvation, and revealing to us the Saviour of sinners, abounds at the same time with moral precepts, which afford the wisest directions for our conduct through life. They who diligently peruse its contents, and sacredly observe its commands, find, by their own experience, that godliness hath both "the promise of this life and of that which is to come." And were the Bible to be regarded only as a code of ethics, an attention to its maxims, and a submission to its rules, would produce a very material change in the manners and habits of mankind: the happiness of society at large would be increased, and the comfort of each individual would be greatly augmented. It directs its censures not only against those vices which carry their own reprehension with them in their effects upon others, but it also reproves those sins, which, appearing to be less mischievous in their tendency, are nevertheless productive

of the worst and most injurious consequences to those who indulge in their commission.

Sloth is a sin altogether contrary to the spirit, and inconsistent with the requirements of the word of truth. How frequently does the wisest of men exhibit this seductive enchantress in all her native deformity! The sluggard is a character which he appears to have resolved to expose, and hold up to its merited contempt. “The soul of the sluggard *desireth* and hath nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.”* “The desire of the *slothful* killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour.”† “The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold, therefore shall he beg in harvest and have nothing.”‡ “Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.”§ Nor are these reprehensions confined to Solomon. Idleness was one of the great iniquities charged against Sodom:—“Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread,

* Prov. xiii. 4.

† Prov. xxi. 25.

‡ Prov. xx. 4.

§ Prov. xix. 15.

and *abundance of idleness* was in her, and in her daughters.”* How sharply does Paul reprove this sin when he reminds the Thessalonians, “that when he was with them, this he commanded them, that if any would not *work*, neither should he eat;”† and he treats them as being unfit for christian society:—and part of his advice to the Romans is, “not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord:”‡ whilst in his epistle to the Hebrews he exhorts them, “that they be not *slothful*, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”§

And what more distinguishing characteristic can be discovered in the sluggard than his indulgence in sleep?—“How long wilt thou sleep, oh! sluggard? a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.”|| “As a door turneth upon its hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom,

* Ezek. xvi. 49. † 2 Thess. iii. 10. ‡ Rom. xii. 11. § Heb. vi. 12. || Prov. vi. 9, 10, 11.

it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth." * And at last his judgment becomes so depraved by the influence of sloth, that he is even not ashamed to advocate its cause: the sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than *seven* men that can render a reason." † Listen again to the warning voice of Solomon; "love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty: *open thine eyes*, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread." ‡ The love of slumber was one of the awful charges laid against the watchmen of Israel: "they were *blind*, they were all ignorant, they were all dumb dogs, they could not bark; *sleeping, lying down*, loving to SLUMBER." §

The word of God very frequently enforces the *value of time*. The numerous allusions which it contains to the brevity of life, and the many instances in which it endeavours, from this consideration, to impress upon the mind of the reader the necessity of an immediate attention to the most important of all concerns, the salvation of

* Prov. xxvi. 14, 15. † Prov. xxvi. 16. ‡ Prov. xx. 13. § Isaiah, lvi. 10.

his soul, afford repeated proofs of the design of the holy spirit in dictating such passages. Their constant inquiry is, if properly applied, “why stand ye here all the day idle?”* and their command, “whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.”† It was the declaration of our great master and guide, “I must work the works of him that sent me while it is *day*; the night cometh when no man can work.”‡ Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, makes the proper employment of time, and the seizing it, as it were, from every thing that would unnecessarily occupy it, the distinguishing mark between the wise and fools:—“see then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise;—*redeeming the time*, because the days are evil: wherefore be ye not *unwise*, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”§ And again, “walk in wisdom toward them that are without, *redeeming the time*.”||

* Matt. xx. 6.

† Eccl. ix. 10.

‡ John, ix. 4.

§ Eph. v. 15, 16, 17.

|| Col. iv. 5.

There are frequent allusions in the sacred writings to the morning, and we find that many very important events in the lives of several individuals occurred in the early part of the day. It was early in the morning that Lot left the fatal city which was soon to be destroyed. "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. *And while he lingered* the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him, and they brought him forth and set him without the city."* It was early in the morning that Isaac and a neighbouring king "sware one to another." "They rose up betimes in the morning."† It was early in the morning that Jacob rose after he was favoured with the heavenly vision on his road to Haran. "And Jacob rose up early in the morning."‡ It was early in the morning that Moses was commanded

* Gen. xix. 15, 16. † Gen. xxvi. 31. ‡ Gen. xxviii. 18.

to deliver his important message to Pharaoh. "And the Lord said unto Moses, *rise up early* in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, (lo! he cometh forth to the water,) and say unto him, thus saith the Lord; let my people go that they may serve me."* It was early in the morning that the Lord appeared for the deliverance of Israel, and destroyed the Egyptians who pursued them. "And it came to pass that *in the morning watch* the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire, and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians."† It was early in the morning that the manna was to be gathered by the Israelites.‡ It was early in the morning that the symbols of idolatry were discovered to have been removed by Gideon, for "when the men of the city rose early *in the morning*, behold the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built."§ It was early in the morning that

* Exod. viii. 20; ix. 13. † Exod. xiv. 24. ‡ Exod. xvi.
§ Judges, vi. 28.

Darius repaired to Daniel to see “if the living God was able to deliver his servant from the lions.” “Then the king arose *very early in the morning*, and went in haste unto the den of lions.”* It was early in the morning that the anxious Marys resorted to the tomb of their risen Lord. “In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn, towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to the sepulchre.”† It was “very early in the morning—at the rising of the sun”‡—“early, when it was yet dark.”§

There are many allusions in the sacred Scriptures to the early part of the day, which should serve to invest it with additional interest. Job, when reflecting on the utter worthlessness of man, inquires, “what is man that thou shouldst magnify him, and that thou shouldst set thy heart upon him? And that thou shouldst visit him every morning?”|| Jeremiah says, “it is of the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not, they are

* Dan. vi. 19. † Matt. xxviii. 1. ‡ Mark, xvi. 2; Luke, xxiv. 1; John, xx. 1. § John, xx. 1. || Job. vii. 17, 18.

new every morning.”* David refers to this period, as being a season of peculiar happiness. “His anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”† Isaiah thus alludes to the morning: “The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; he wakeneth *morning by morning*; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.”‡ The prophet Hosea compares the advance of the Lord to this period. “Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning.”§

The morning is frequently employed as a simile by the sacred writers. The promise made to Job, on his “preparing his heart and stretching out his hand to God,” was, that “his age should be clearer than the noon day; he should shine forth, he should be as the morning.”|| The promise to repenting Israel is, “Then shall the

* Lam. iii. 22, 23. † Psalms, xxx. 5. ‡ Isaiah, l. 4. § Hosea, vi. 3. || Job, xi. 17.

light break forth *as the morning*, and thy *health* shall spring forth speedily.* The promise to him that overcometh and keepeth his works unto the end, is, “that to *him* shall be given the *morning star*,”† and the great *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *beginning* and the *end*, the *first* and the *last*, declares that *he* is “the bright and *morning star*.”‡

Consider, my dear Charles, the long train of examples which holy writ records, of the practice of the habit of early rising. Can I say more to recommend it, than that it has been approved and followed by patriarchs, prophets, and kings? has been recommended by a Solomon, and enforced by the example of a greater than Solomon? Abraham “got up early in the morning.”§ Isaac rose up “betimes in the morning.”|| Jacob “rose up early in the morning.”¶ Laban “rose up early in the morning.”** Moses “rose up early in the morning.”††

* Isaiah, lviii. 8. † Rev. ii. 28. ‡ Rev. xxii. 16.

§ Gen. xix. 27; xxi. 14; xxii. 3. || Gen. xxvi. 31. ¶ Gen. xxviii. 18. ** Gen. xxxi. 55. †† Exod. xxiv. 4; xxxiv. 4.

Job rose up early in the morning, and “thus did he continually.”* Gideon “rose up early in the morning.”† Joshua “rose early in the morning.”‡ Samuel “rose early to meet Saul in the morning.”§ David “rose up early in the morning.”|| Jeremiah continued in the habit of “rising early and speaking” for twenty-three years.¶ Nehemiah and his fellow-labourers “laboured from the *rising of the morning* till the stars appeared.”** And our blessed Saviour is represented as having risen early, affording a practical illustration of his own precept, “work whilst it is day.” It was “at the break of day that he called to him his disciples, and chose of them twelve, whom he called apostles.”†† It was “*early in the morning* that the people came to him in the temple to hear him.”‡‡ “It was *early in the morning* that Jesus came into the temple

* Job. i. 5. † Judges, vi. 28, 38. ‡ Joshua, iii. 1; vi. 12; vii. 16; viii. 10. § 1 Sam. ix. 26; xv. 12. || 1 Sam. xvii. 20. Psalms, v. 3; lv. 17; lix. 16; lxxxviii. 13. xcii. 1. 2; cxix. 147; cxliii. 8. ¶ Jer. xxv. 3; vii. 13. ** Nehem. iv. 21. †† Luke, vi. 13. ‡‡ Luke, xxi. 38.

and all the people came unto him :”* and it was “in the morning, a great while before day, that he went out to a solitary place to pray.”†

I will not add any observations of my own in addition to these scriptural illustrations and examples : “Go thou, and do likewise.”

Yours, &c.

* John, viii, 2. † Mark, i. 35.

LETTER XV.

To the same.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

WHATEVER may have been the opinion you once entertained respecting the effects which religion is calculated to produce upon the mind, and whatever false notions you may have formerly imbibed as to its tendency to lead to a state of mental dejection; you have long since abandoned these mistaken sentiments, and have been enabled to refute the aspersion, whenever it has been cast by others on the truths which you now hold so dear, by a reference to your own experience, and an appeal to your personal knowledge. Though I may not know all the varied feelings which have attended your Christian course, nor be acquainted with the alternate hopes and fears which have brightened or clouded your prospects; yet I have every reason to believe that you have not been altogether a

stranger to that "peace which passeth all understanding;" and that you have habitually (though, perhaps, not uninterruptedly,) enjoyed that calm and rational complacency, which can only result from the soul's reposing itself on its God; and which is perpetuated by the vivid apprehension of that in him, which is truly delectable and pleasing to us, leading the soul to such an estimation of the perfections of the object of its admiration, and to so ardent an affection for the Father of all its mercies, as have rendered the recollection of former enjoyments derived from temporal objects, and former pleasures resulting from inferior employments, a source of unfeigned repentance, and a cause for self-accusation and surprise. "Wisdom's ways are," indeed, "ways of pleasantness, and her paths are," indeed, "paths of peace." The joys of piety are such as those only know, who have drank at the fountain of life from whence they issue; the blessings which she bestows are not scattered around her with a heedless profusion: and whilst their reality is denied by some, and a participation

in them claimed by others, who have never experienced them; the humble disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus, appearing to the world to be bending beneath a cross which he can scarcely sustain, and the weight of which they are willing to increase by the obloquy they affix to his conduct, treads in the footsteps of his Master, follows him "through evil and through good report" on earth; and fixing the eye of faith upon him who has been "made perfect through sufferings," and who, "though crucified through weakness, yet liveth by the power of God,"* rejoices in the exaltation of his ascended Lord, and exults in the prospect of the fulfilment of the promise, that "where he is, there shall his servants be also."† The world may witness the self-denial that a firm belief in the doctrines of the Gospel produces, but they cannot read the hearts of those who practise it. They may see and despise the cross that is taken up, but they are ignorant of the crown that is to succeed. They may distinguish some

* 2 Cor. xiii. 4. † John, xii. 26.

of the thorns that strew the pilgrim's road, but they know not the pilgrim's happiness, when his heart is overflowing with love and tenderness, on the recollection that the thorns which now may wound his feet, once pierced his Saviour's head. They have yet to learn, that we have "joys which a stranger intermeddleth not with;"* that we have delights which they do not envy, because they cannot feel; and that the religion which we profess, and the Gospel we embrace, impart a high-raised hope and an exulting anticipation, a present happiness, and an assurance of future glory, which, contrasted with *their* groveling pursuits and misnamed pleasures, make them shrink into worse than nothingness, into a hideousness and deformity, which the light of truth alone could reveal.

The mortification and self-denial of the Christian are a voluntary obedience paid to the commands of him, whom he considers it his highest honour to serve. His submission to his authority, and his compliance

* Prov. xiv. 10.

with his will, are not the constrained subjection of one who only wants the power to break off the yoke, but the spontaneous acts of what he feels to be "a reasonable service." Whilst he often "sows in tears," he knows that he shall eternally "reap in joy." It is not merely his privilege to be permitted to participate in the pleasures of devotion, but the enjoyment of them forms part of the exhortations contained in the sacred writings. "Rejoice evermore."* "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice."† Indeed the very feelings which religious worship inspires, are necessarily connected with spiritual delight. Can there be any emotions more conducive to our happiness than such as the generous affections of gratitude excite? And who has such cause for gratitude as the Christian? How delightful is that utterance of the sentiments of the heart which accompanies praise, when he contemplates the glories of the divine Being, as exhibited in the traces of his footsteps in nature, and displayed in

* 1 Thess. v. 16. † Philip. iv. 4.

the perfection of his attributes in Revelation. How pleasing are those acknowledgments of obligation, and expressions of thankfulness, which are produced by the recollections of his dependence upon the Father of all his mercies, and by reflecting on the compassion of his Saviour, "who, though he was rich, yet, for his sake, became poor, that he through his poverty might be made rich."

Are you inclined to ask me, my dear Charles, how far these remarks are relevant to the subject of our present correspondence? If you put such a question, I am satisfied that the doubt can only originate from an ignorance of the peculiar feelings which the Christian experiences in the early part of the day. If there be any time especially favourable to devotional exercises, and particularly calculated to excite sentiments of praise, it is in the morning. I have already alluded to the effect which early rising has upon the body, and the consequent elasticity of mind which it occasions: and it is one of the exclusive pri-

vileges of the Christian, to render the temporary feelings which circumstances produce, subservient to the great and important interests of his eternal welfare. Is he depressed and dejected? He can yield to the emotions of his grief, by turning his sorrows into the channel of repentance for his sins, and contrition for his guilt. Is his mind elated, are his anticipations bright, his hopes high-raised, his prospects pleasing? He can employ these elevated feelings in thankfulness for the mercies which he has received, and the blessings of which he has been made a partaker. It is thus that he fulfils the command, to "do all to the glory of God;" and thus he converts even the variations of his disposition, into opportunities for rendering homage to his Maker.

But remember, my dear Charles, that independent of the solid and immediate satisfaction that results from the appropriation of the early part of the day to the service of God, there are advantages connected with it of more permanent duration, and

more general benefit. By directing the first thoughts of the mind,* and reverently and thankfully lifting up the heart to him, who has preserved you through the hours of darkness, and permitted you to behold the returning light: by committing yourself to the care and protection of that watchful Being amidst the snares and temptations of the day, who has been your guardian through the dangers of the night; and by so habituating yourself to this early act of devotion, that your conscience will check you, should worldly thoughts intrude, and claim the "first fruits" of your morning meditations; you will prepare your mind for the performance of those duties which are to succeed, and will commence with that "fear of the Lord" which will attend you "all the day long."† The current of thought will retain that peculiar colour with

* The most excellent Bishop Ken used to follow the practice of rising immediately on awaking from his first sleep, and taking his lute as an accompaniment to his voice, he commenced his devotions with a solemn hymn of praise.

† Prov. xxiii. 17.

which it was tinged at its source ; and will continue to flow in the same channel when far removed from the spring which gave it its first direction. And to you, my dear friend, who have so often lamented the indisposition to the duties and the pleasures of religion which your worldly engagements have produced ; whose pursuit of secular objects has often been attended with the suspicion that each advance towards their attainment, might be a retrogression from those of infinitely greater moment ; and whose heart, when gladdening at success, has shuddered with the fear, lest it might be attempting to “ serve two masters :” to you the dedication of the morning hours to the great concerns of your soul, is of unspeakable importance. You have often anticipated with delight the approach of the Sabbath, knowing, from past experience, its tendency to wean your affections from earth, and to lead them “ to those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”* And why will

* Coloss. iii. 1.

you not make each morning of your life the Sabbath of the day? Why may not the undue attachment to the world which the preceding day has produced, be then overcome; and a preservative secured against the temptations of that which is approaching? And instead of mourning over your departures from God, "dragging at each remove a lengthening chain," which though it prevents your total separation, marks, by its extent, your lamentable distance from the object of your better love, and source of your real enjoyments; why will you not be daily drawn "with cords of a man, with bands of love" nearer to that "rock of ages" which is "higher than you," from which you can never be driven by the "pitiless storms" of the world, nor allured by its deceitful calm?

And let me intreat you, my dear young friend, to watch with a most jealous eye every inclination that you feel, and every desire that you discover, to relapse again to that world, from which you have, I hope, been called to "come out," and to be "separate." Remember that your christian life

should be one continued effort to advance against the stream of sensual gratifications and carnal indulgences; and, therefore, if you suffer an intermission in your exertions, you will not remain stationary at the point already gained, but you will be carried more rapidly down by your ease, than you advanced by your labour. The symptoms of a declension in religion, and of spiritual decay, are such as can leave no doubt of the existence of the malady when once it has attacked you; and you will do well to resort immediately to those remedies which may check its advance, before it has seized upon the very vitals of christianity. If you are conscious of a neglect of those things which relate to your everlasting peace, a disregard of divine objects, a remissness in your attention to those duties which are essential to the character you have assumed, and a distaste for the acts of private and social worship, which formerly constituted your highest enjoyments; you may be assured that an attachment to sensual pleasures will soon ensue, and the world will acquire an influence over you, altogether inconsistent with

your profession, and opposed to your happiness. You will be indifferent to the very means which are calculated to correct your error, and to lead you back to God. Prayer will be omitted: the Scriptures will be slighted: the secret devotions of the closet will be discontinued; and self-examination will be disused. Oh! what will be your bitter repentance, when, returning like a wandering sheep “to the shepherd and bishop of your soul,” you reflect on how many successive pages of your Bible may be written—“unread:” for how long a space of time may be inscribed on a throne of grace, “unfrequented;” the spirit, “grieved;” and God unsought.

And if, with that salutary apprehension which will lead you “to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” you dread a relapse into such a state; as you value your immortal soul, as you prize its eternal interests, and as you appreciate the importance of its present happiness and its future destiny; secure, my dear Charles, oh! secure the opportunities which the morning affords you, of attending to those

duties in the closet, which, with the accompanying blessing of God, shall effectually prevent your spiritual decay. It is then that you should present your petitions to the throne of grace; that you should implore divine assistance to enable you to perform the duties that may devolve upon you, and to resist the temptations that may assail you through the coming day; that you should supplicate the blessing of God upon those undertakings in which you are to be engaged; that you should look up to "the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning, for every good and every perfect gift you need;"* it is then that you should "ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not," for "that wisdom which you lack," and "it shall be given you;"† a wisdom which shall teach you the line of conduct you should pursue, shall tell you the opportunities you should improve, warn you of the dangers you should shun, caution you against the temptations you should resist,

* James, i. 17.

† Ibid. i. 5.

and inspire you with the disposition and temper you should manifest in your intercourse with the world, so that "your conversation may in all things "be as becometh the Gospel of Christ."*

It is during the leisure and stillness of morning too, that the best opportunity will be afforded to "search the Scriptures." It is then that you will be enabled, not merely to read them, but to make them the very food of your soul; "to mark, learn, and inwardly digest them;" to "meditate on the word in the word;"† to examine the Bible as the chart by which you are to steer, and by the aid of which, in your voyage through life, you are to avoid the rocks and quicksands with which this dangerous sea abounds; to regard the sacred volume as the charter by which you hold your present possessions, and secure your future inheritance. And whilst you properly estimate the value of that revelation of the divine will which the word of God contains, considering the Scriptures as the

* Phil. i. 27. † Owen.

manifestation of his goodness, justice, mercy, and truth; of the holiness of his law, and the spirituality of his commands; of the compassion of the Saviour; the duties and privileges of believers, and the glories of heaven: whilst you thus estimate the word of truth, you will be daily more and more convinced of the importance of its frequent perusal, and the necessity of its repeated study.

The mere habit of reading the Scriptures, is not, in itself, sufficient to produce those good effects which you are desirous should result from it, but it must be accompanied with earnest prayer to God for the enlightening influences of his Holy Spirit; and the truths which are contained in them must be personally applied to your peculiar circumstances, and individual feelings. But such an application cannot be made, if they are perused in a cursory and inattentive manner. A considerable portion of time is requisite for this employment; but the benefits to be derived from it are amply commensurate, both in number and magnitude, with the hours which are so

occupied, and the attention that is thus bestowed. If you wish to experience, to the full extent, the advantages which such a perusal of the word of God affords, you must exercise a close and diligent self-examination. You must consider what connection there is between the truths which it contains, and the actual feelings of your own heart. You must take it as a candle with which to search the dark "chambers of imagery" of your secret thoughts; and as you discover idol after idol not thrown down, you must resolve, in the divine strength, "to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* You must regard "the truth as it is in Jesus" as being only valuable to you, in proportion as it is reflected in your own life and character. You must make the word of God the mirror in which you are to view yourself, nor must you leave it satisfied with a rapid glance, "straightway forgetting what manner of man you were;"† but you must endeavour to discover every defect; you must

* 2 Cor. x. 5. † James, i. 24.

observe every mark of carelessness and inattention; nor must you rest contented with any thing short of the removal of the one, and the correction of the other.

And recollect, my dear Charles, that as a soldier of Jesus Christ, you have an arduous contest in which you must be engaged, and a warfare which you must constantly wage against the most subtile and undaunted foe. Each day becomes an arena in which you must fight the battles of the Lord; and will you rush into the field of action undefended and unarmed? You are exhorted "to put on the whole armour of God,"* to have "your loins girt about with truth; to have on the breast-plate of righteousness; your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; and above all, to take the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; to take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." It is by the diligent perusal of the Scriptures, by prayer

* Eph. vi. 13.

and by meditation, that we keep our christian armour bright and ready. It is in the morning, before the conflict has commenced, that you will have leisure to "put it on," to arrange every part, to equip yourself so as to leave no place unguarded. And will you venture to meet your wily adversary without this previous preparation? will you not allow yourself time to adjust your armour? will you take the shield, whilst your head is left undefended, or your feet entangled by your loins being ungirt? will you cover your head with the helmet, but omit the breast-plate, exposing the very vitals of Christianity to the assault of the foe? or will you be satisfied with clothing yourself in the "*whole* armour," deeming that sufficient to secure you; and stand inactive, without a weapon to attack, without the sword to repel and to overcome your adversary?

And you will not only do well thus to prepare yourself for the fight, but also to survey the field of battle on which you are to engage; and to watch the previous movements of the foes with whom you are to contend. Ascend the hill of morning, and

thence survey the plain that lies beneath you. It commands a view so ample, and an extent so wide, that you may discern between the point of vision and the horizon that bounds your prospect, every enemy that will oppose you. Mark their positions: see where they are forming their ambuscades; where planting their batteries; and where marshalling their forces. It is thus you will defeat their designs: by anticipating their movements you will be prepared to render them unavailing: and when the great enemy of souls assaults you, where he imagines you are weakest, and brings his strongest temptations, and employs his most subtle wiles; you will be able triumphantly to overthrow his purposes, and subvert his efforts, because "you were not ignorant of his devices."

Yours, with sincere affection.

LETTER XVI.

To the same.

MY DEAR CHARLES,

DID I not know the tyrannical nature of the habit of lying late in bed, and that it overcomes every consideration of christian duty and christian privilege, I could not believe that you would suffer yourself to be deprived by it of any part of that valuable day, which should be more particularly occupied by religious exercises. And if I wished, in addition to those arguments which I have already urged, to advance one that should be more convincing and conclusive than the rest, I scarcely know whether I could avail myself of a stronger, to prove the pernicious nature of this slothful custom, than by a reference to the melancholy fact, that it not only makes its inroads upon your time, which is always precious, and interferes with those employ-

ments which ordinarily engage your attention; that it not only robs you through the week of opportunities for improvement and usefulness, but that it even stretches forth its sacrilegious hand, and lays it upon the ark of that solemn and interesting period, which the Creator of the world hallowed and blessed, which our Saviour consecrated by the completion of the great work of salvation on his resurrection from the dead, and which the Holy Spirit distinguished by his descent upon the early disciples of our Lord.

Need I remind you of the peculiar value of the SABBATH? of its importance to *you* particularly, whose engagements in the world are so calculated to wean your affections from those things which alone can really deserve them, and thus, instead of your treasure and your heart being both in heaven, leading you to seek for the one, and consequently to set the affections of the other, upon earth? of the peculiar benefit resulting from that withdrawment from your secular pursuits, that freedom from anxiety about your temporal concerns, and that re-

linquishment of your worldly business which this day affords? of the advantage which springs from your views being then less bounded, your prospects more extended, your passions disenthralled from the corrupting influence which has enslaved them through the week, and your hopes, unfettered by the delusive but enchanting promise of earthly prosperity, “full of immortality?” Need I recal to your recollection the beneficial effects which flow from the occupations of this day? The perusal of the word of God, the contemplation of his glorious attributes, meditation on his divine perfections, a personal application of scripture truth, earnest supplication at a throne of grace, and an attendance on the public service of the sanctuary? These, my dear Charles, are the employments peculiarly suited for the sabbath, and a few of the privileges connected with them; and can you conscientiously neglect the obligation of observing the former, or will you voluntarily relinquish the happiness of participating in the latter?

It is true, my dear friend, that this is a day of "*rest*," but it is a rest with which sloth is altogether at variance; it has all the spirituality of the one, without any of the carnality of the other. And whilst a diligent attention to the duties of the sabbath will justify the appellation, and will afford to the Christian a foretaste of that "*rest* which remaineth for the people of God;" a criminal neglect of those duties, and an indulgence in the sinful propensities of the flesh, instead of imparting the refreshment, and bestowing the vigour that are required will rob the mind of those energies, and the spirit of that daring, which are necessary to support and animate the Christian in the constant warfare in which he is engaged.

And if the sabbath is indeed so precious, if it is of so much importance, and is able, when properly employed, to produce such beneficial effects, how great must be your folly and criminality, if you are not anxious to secure as much of such a valuable season as lies within your reach! The neglect of this argues either a total insensibility to

its importance, or a very inadequate conception of its value. Will you suffer the world to engage six times as large a portion of your thoughts as the infinitely more important concerns of your soul; and even diminish, by a surrender to a sensual indulgence, the length of that period which you professedly snatch from the world?

If it is incumbent on you as a Christian, to begin every returning day by a solemn dedication of yourself to God, a thankful acknowledgment of his preserving and protecting mercy, and an earnest entreaty for the continuance of his favours, what peculiarly strong reasons have you for such a commencement of the sabbath. The motives to gratitude which on other days may appear of a more ordinary nature, should then assume a stronger and more influential force. The Christian has reason to value each successive sabbath as a blessing proceeding immediately from his "Father who is in heaven," who, by its appointment, affords him at once a proof of his continued love, and an opportunity to attend to those

devotional exercises which produce in his breast a willing, though faint return of a similar principle. And whilst the great and eternal Father, and the Son of his love invite, will you refuse to hear? Whilst the Holy Spirit is soliciting your attention, and “waiting to be gracious,” will you act as you did in that state of awful darkness, when the sabbath was “a weariness, and your soul took no pleasure in it?”

It is in the early part of this hallowed day, that you may experience some of the purest pleasures and highest enjoyments which devotion is capable of affording. You may remember seasons when the mind required to be *forced* to an attention to the great and important realities of religion, and when you have been obliged, by an effort, as it were, to raise it above the vanities of the world. But now it voluntarily rises towards heaven; it has already left the earth; its flight is directed upwards, and you may continue it to the throne of the great Eternal himself. It is at such a time as this that you are indeed “*led* by the

Spirit;" that the slightest influence is sufficiently powerful to draw you where it wills; that the least insinuation, and the gentlest impulse are effectual. It is then that his almost unexpected gales waft the spirit along the channel of divine love to the great object of its affections, "the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." It is at such an hour as this that a solemnity fills the mind, which robs the delusions of the world of their deceitful hue; which leads it to look back upon its brightest visionary scenes of anticipated temporal enjoyment as the day dreams of a disordered imagination, and to contemplate their future realization with a complete and unanxious indifference; and which unfolds the glories of eternity in so overwhelming a manner, that even the most engaging objects of time and sense, form no part of the extended prospect which enraptures the mental vision. It is at such a period as this that you no longer mourn in the valley of humiliation, whilst "he whom your soul loveth" denies his cheering and animating

presence ; but, improving and complying with the internal impulse which prompts you to the exercises of prayer and praise, your faith ascends like an eagle* towards the skies, raises her mighty crest, and soaring towards the glorious "Sun of Righteousness," who is rising "with healing on his wings," purges and unseals at the fountain of heavenly radiance itself, those orbs which the darkness of her lower residence had obscured, whilst the flocking doubts and timorous fears that love the twilight, flutter around, amazed at what she means, abashed by her daring, and confounded by the height she has attained. It is then that

"The soul,

Snatch'd by the spirit's power from its cell
Of fleshly thralldom, feels itself upborne
On plumes of ecstasy, and boldly springs
Up to the porch of heaven."

It has very often been a source of regret to you, my dear Charles, that the sabbath, however anxiously anticipated,

* The reader will recollect Milton's sublime comparison of liberty to an eagle.

and however cordially welcomed, has frequently passed away, without its having produced either those beneficial effects which you had formerly experienced, or those elevated pleasures which you have occasionally enjoyed. The world, though professedly dismissed from your thoughts, has intruded upon your more serious hours; and even the exercises of devotion and the public worship of the sanctuary have been polluted by its contaminating influence, and interrupted by its distracting perplexities. Nor do I wonder at this. If those christians whose lives are almost exclusively devoted to the service of God, and whose attention is generally directed to those objects which are calculated to inspire them with devotional feelings, have had reason to complain of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of their hearts, and have mourned over their tendency to yield to the surrounding attractions of sense; is it to be wondered at, if you, who are so much engaged in secular pursuits, whose wishes are so often suffered to be directed to temporal attainments, and

whose energies are so frequently exerted for this purpose; is it to be wondered at, if you rush at once from these into "the courts of the Lord," without any previous preparation, without allowing yourself either time or opportunity to collect your scattered thoughts, and to turn them into a different and more suitable channel; that your worship should be attended with so little spirituality of mind, and be characterized by so little of that truth which a holy and jealous God requires?

The hours of meditative leisure which the morning supplies, are calculated to be particularly serviceable to you, as the remaining parts of the day do not afford those opportunities for the duties of the closet which you may then possess. The public worship of God, and your attendance to sabbath school-instruction, leave you a very small portion of time for a personal application of the truths of the Gospel. There is a possibility of your more active engagements assuming too much the nature of business, and becoming almost as unpro-

ductive of religious feelings as secular occupations, depriving you of the privileges which they are in themselves capable of affording when entered upon with a proper spirit, and in a suitable frame of mind. I am particularly anxious that you should guard against this, as it will divest the sabbath of some of its most valuable blessings, and will render it unproductive of its characteristic beneficial influence. Let the silent hours of the morning of this hallowed day witness the fervour of your devotions, the warmth of your gratitude, and the ardour of your love. Let the early prayer ascend to your risen Lord for communications of mercy suited to the day; let "the sweet hour of prime" be the date of your petitions to the throne of grace; secure this semblance of Paradise before the objects of sense have tempted you to taste their forbidden fruit; and enjoy that communion with the most high God, which he vouchsafes to those who "walk with him."

Consider the example David sets of the practice I have recommended. "My

voice," says he, " shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord! in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."* " Unto thee have I cried, O Lord! and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee."† " It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High!"—" To shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."‡ He declares that " he prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried;" his " eyes prevented the night watches."§

It is worthy of observation, that all of the evangelists, in their narration of the circumstances attending the resurrection of Jesus Christ, have particularly marked the *time* when the two Marys visited the sepulchre of their Lord. It was "as it began to dawn,"||—it was "very early in the morning;"¶ it was "when it was yet dark."** Their anxiety about their Lord

* Psalm v. 3.

† Psalm lxxxviii. 13.

‡ Psalm

xcii. 1, 2.

§ Psalm cxix. 147, 8.

|| Matt. xxviii. 1.

¶ Mark, xvi. 2; Luke, xxiv. 1.

** John, xx. 1.

was evidently the predominant feeling of their bosoms, and it would not permit them to lose a moment without endeavouring to relieve their solicitude. And though their faith was still weak, and their object appears partly to have been to embalm the Saviour's body, yet the recollection of his declarations must have led them to have indulged some faint hopes of the glorious event which they afterwards found accomplished. But you have no such doubts. The sabbath morning beams on you, as the returning witness of the consummation of the Saviour's work, and the completion of your redemption. Your retrospective faith may look back with mingled emotions of joy and gratitude on the period when Jesus rose from his dark and dreary bed, and *rose early* for your everlasting welfare. Your object is not to embalm his lifeless body, but to "look to the author and finisher of your faith," your ascended Lord, "the light which is the life of men." And will you not hail the first ray of that material sun that invites you to fix your admiring eyes

on the glorious Being of whom he forms but a faint resemblance, and affords an inadequate comparison?

The time is rapidly approaching, my dear Charles, when our successive earthly sabbaths, the preludes of an eternal rest, will no longer by their immediate consecration to the Lord, form a contrast to the other portions of our time; but when one lengthened, endless, hallowed day will enable us to be "still praising" the God of our salvation and the Redeemer of our souls. What will be our feelings, when the infirmities of the body and the weaknesses of the flesh no longer interfere with our devotional exercises? when, after the "multitude who have *slept* in the dust of the earth shall have *awaked* to everlasting life,"* no night† shall again intrude, no darkness again intervene, no slumber again be known? when the *rest* we shall enjoy will be connected with an activity of service, whose very performance will be at once the fulfilment of duty, and the renovation of our powers? and

* Dan. xii. 2.

† Rev. xxi. 25.

when, as ministers of the Most High we shall be "swift to fulfil his commands" and "do his pleasure," deriving new strength from obedience, and fresh vigour from exertion? And what will be the terrors of those, who, "*awaking* to shame and everlasting contempt,"* will look back with feelings of remorse upon the long and deceitful dream of life, and shudder at the approach of an interminable succession of realities, with no slumber to soothe their pains, and no repose to produce a temporary oblivion of their misery. Happy indeed are we if the delightful anticipations which our earthly sabbaths sometimes afford, are the result of a well-grounded faith in Jesus Christ; happy if there is prepared for us "a kingdom that cannot be moved,"—"an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading;" "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and "pleasures at God's right hand, for evermore."

That my dear Charles may at last "inherit the promises," and thus find every an-

* Dan. xii. 2.

icipation of his hope, and every expectation of his faith exceeded by those "things which God hath prepared for them that love him," is the sincere and earnest wish of his

truly affectionate friend.

THE END.











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